ONE-HALF MILE SOUTH IS THE SITE OF
NAMAQUA
A STAGE POST AND HOME OF MARIANA MODENA
THE FIRST SETTLER IN THE
BIG THOMPSON VALLEY
MARKED BY
NAMAQUA CHAPTER
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

This Marker Stands Near The Loveland-Estes Park Highway, a Short Distance West of the City of Loveland, Colorado

Active Members of Namaqua Chapter, Loveland, Colorado, Daughters of the American Revolution.

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NAMAQUA

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BY

PIERCE EGAN

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DEDICATION

To the most wonderful woman I know in all the world. To the mother of my children. To my wife — I dedicate this book

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PREFACE

1925 Many of the characters of this story are alive today and reside in the vicinity of Loveland, Colorado. The cabin of Louis Papa, now an old man, stands beside the Loveland-Estes Park Highway, in the Big Thompson canon, near the Loveland municipal light and power plant. This being a story of the past, many of the characters are dead and many of their graves may be found near Loveland. Jack Sailsbury sleeps in an unmarked grave beside the Big Thompson canon road to Estes Park, near Montrose Inn, a resort west of Loveland. Mariana Modena is buried three miles and a half southwest of Loveland. The wife of Dr. Hutchinson is buried beside the canon road west of Loveland, not far from the grave of Jack Sailsbury. "Grandpa" Langston is buried within a few feet of the Loveland-Estes Park Highway, just before the road enters the canon. Lucas Brandt and Milo Osborn reside at Loveland as do many of the other characters mentioned in the story. The letters by Isabelle Byrd were actually written by her. We received per-

mission to use them. The rendezvous of Dan Delaney was located in the mountains, about fifteen miles west of Loveland in the Big Thompson canon and "Rock Haven," a summer resort owned by Mr. and Mrs. Mark A. Ellison, is now located on the spot where the Delaney camp stood.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to Harold M. Dunning, photographer and former mountain guide who has scaled to the top of Long's Peak thirty times, for aiding us in gathering many historical facts which we have woven into this story of fiction and romance. Mr. Dunning is, at the time this story is written, conducting a shoe store at Loveland, Colorado.

To Reed Hayward, president of the Loveland Lumber and Investment Company, who has been more than a friend to the author in times when a friend was most needed, we also extend our appreciation.

The purpose in writing this story is an attempt to keep alive some of the beautiful romance of early days, which has been more or less forgotten by the advancing civilization.

— PIERCE EGAN

NAMAQUA

CHAPTER I

A Little Pink Flower

Had Namaqua been privileged to designate her place of birth she probably would not have picked the smouldering ruins of an immigrant train, beside the Overland trail in the Big Thompson valley of Colorado. It was the month of April and Namaqua was not due to open her big blue baby eyes for a first glimpse at this world until June, when the immigrant train, with her parents on board, expected to be well in the heart of the Pacific West.

But fate had stacked the cards in a peculiar manner and when Joe Papa and his good wife whom he called "John," stole down from their mountain retreat, to survey the havoc wrought by Dan Delaney, white renegade, and his band of breeds and whites, they found a little five pound bundle of pink and white babyhood buried in the wreckage and overlooked by the bandits who took the dead mother and the balance of the humans

who composed the caravan and had given their life as a tribute to Delaney and his thieving band, to the mountain retreat for cremation.

Prompted by a motherly instinct the Indian squaw knelt beside the form of the little stranger and tenderly wrapped her in blankets and carried her to the tepee in the mountains; giving her the name of Namaqua, she was duly adopted as a member of the family.

The transplanting of this beautiful little pink flower of the east into the heart of the wildest region of the west brought a new spirit of friendliness into the souls of the Indians for their white brothers, who were constantly increasing in numbers, trekking across the Overland trail that bridged a continent. And could Namaqua have seen anything but the swarthy features of her foster mother, there would have opened to the eyes of this child of eastern civilization a panorama of the greatest picture of western scenery that nature has ever painted. But nestling at the breast of the Indian woman Namaqua contented herself by nursing her way to health and sturdiness, beside her foster brother, Louis Papa, whose birth had occurred a few days previous to the advent of the immigrant train into the valley.

Through the veins of Louis Papa coursed a mixed blood, for his father, Joe Papa, was a Frenchman, who had come here from the San Louis Valley in southern Colorado, not as a permanent settler but as a wanderer who lived an outdoor life with the Indian tribes. Louis' mother was a Flathead squaw.

From his tepee at the Keyhole in the Devil's Backbone, a range of hills overlooking the Big Thompson valley, the inherent love for nature of this French wanderer found peace and contentment. To the west, the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains rose to meet the sky and at evening the afterglow of the sunset painted the hills a most gorgeous color of purple and gold. The Big Thompson river that rises amid the snow-capped peaks of the divide, leaping and thundering through a canon so steep that its mighty walls penetrate the clouds and almost shut out the light of day, could be heard from the tepee of Joe Papa. After bursting from the imprisonment of the range, the river calmly stretched its silver ribbon through the valley and with its slumber song lulled to sleep Namaqua and her foster brother in their primitive home at the Keyhole of the Devil's Backbone, overlooking the stream.

To the north stretched away the valley of the Buckhorn, with herds of deer and elk and buffalo browsing on the tender shoots of the short cropped grass, the foliage of the encircling hills. Now and then a little wobbly-legged, mouse colored fawn would arouse from its slumber, arise and totter unsteadily after its mother. Huge mountain eagles, the vultures of the west, soared in the heavens awaiting an opportunity to prey upon some weakened or infant creature in the herds below.

The moccasin foot of a huntsman stealthily felt its way through a ravine — a runner for Delaney's outlaw band, in search for buffalo, raised his rifle and fired. His aim was true and a huge buffalo cow, attempting to follow the stampede of the leaders, ran a short distance and crumpled to the ground. The huntsman fired but one shot, for Delaney's men were traiped to kill only humans for sport and to slay wild animals when necessity demanded. The Frenchman watched the buffalo scamper over the ridge toward their hiding place on the Redstone, to the sugar bowl of Happy Hollow, far out of reach of the renegade band, for Happy Hollow was the undisputed territory of the Redman

The deer, more curious than the buffalo, at the sound of the shot, ran for the higher timber-covered range of hills lying east and west of the Redstone valley and here they paused to gaze back on the valley from which they had just been driven. Some of them, more curious than the rest, started to walk slowly back toward the hunter who was busily engaged in carving the buffalo. Though timid in the extreme, a deer cannot overcome the instinct of curiosity. The mother deer, however, took their fawn to the higher portions of the ridge where Horsetooth mountain rises 7,500 feet above the sea level. From this point of vantage they satisfied their desire to investigate the source of danger from which they had just fled.

The Frenchman reached for his rifle, took steady aim and fired. The man carving the buffalo sank to the ground. The Buckhorn valley and all it contained belonged to Joe Papa, and this was his challenge to Dan Delaney that the Buckhorn was not a healthy place for outlaws and renegades.

Papa stepped back into the tepee where Namaqua lay sleeping in her Indian crib.

"She's a white girl," he said, pointing to the frail little bundle of babyhood. "White, 'John,'

just like me. Our papoose, he's half white too. Some day the two will get big. Some one might kill me before that time. When they get big enough you tell them they are not brother and sister. She will make our papoose a good squaw."

CHAPTER II

Dan Delaney

Dan Delaney was an outlaw because the flip of a copper coin had so decreed.

When he returned from Harvard to Washington, D. C., after his graduation from law school and learned that Sally Burch, to whom he had pledged his boyhood love, had been married for almost a year, to Col. Thomas Lee — a Virginia Lee, at that — he flipped a coin to see whether he should kill Lee and stand trial for murder — or kill him and then depart for the westland to seek his fortune and forgetfulness. He was fully determined to kill his rival, regardless of the fates the coin held for him. Lee had been his trusted friend and Sally his sweetheart. Both had betrayed him. He bet the head of the coin on the westland and flipped it. The head came up. Delaney shot Lee to death and vanished from civilization. He also killed his sweetheart, Sally, although he was not aware of the fact. But on the night following the murder of Lee, Mrs. Lee

gave birth to a baby girl and sacrificed her life in bringing little Sally Lee into the world.

Delaney was a fine specimen of manhood — a man of strong personality and striking physique, over six feet tall, broad shouldered, with tapering waist, he tipped the beam at slightly over 220 pounds. Fear was foreign to his nature.

Upon coming westward he began to drink heavily and his one-time cheerful disposition was turned into one of extreme surliness. Hatred was eating into his soul. He became quarrelsome and a dangerous man in an argument.

So embittered was he because of an outraged love that he could not tolerate the sight of women and finally the dance halls at the posts of civilization, where he attempted to drown his sorrow in the forgetfulness of drink, became so obnoxious to him because of the presence of women that he sought the solitude of the Colorado mountains, organized a band of renegades, whites and reds, who made their living by attacking immigrant trains and stage coaches that passed over the Overland route through the Big Thompson vailey.

Delaney became known as the most notorious and brutal outlaw of the West. He took no prison-

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ers and women captured by his band were immediately put to death by his orders. He had one rule, rigidly enforced by the men under his command. Never were they to bring any white women captives before him or allow him to look upon their face. He was a squaw man, and had several squaws in his household, but he used them as slaves and white women he refused to see.

The rendezvous of Delaney, in the heart of the mountains, beneath the highest peaks of the Big Thompson canon, furnished him shelter from storms of winter and a safe hiding place and impregnable fortress against any concerted action by soldiers or hostile Indian tribes. Delaney was a remarkable man in many ways. He was hated by his followers but he held them together because they feared him. Many Indians outside of the pale of the renegade band were almost his slaves because they both feared and revered him for his cold, cruel, and fearless nature.

The only thing he ever attempted to teach his followers was the lesson of hate. He often called them together and attempted to instill into the hearts of the white men and breeds alike, that "there is no God. There is no love. The instinct of sex is the only binding tie between men and

women." His denial of a God or the Indian Manitou drove fear into the hearts of the redskins and they almost worshipped the man who dared to defy so great a personage as the Keeper of the Happy Hunting Ground. The white men of the band regarded him as a dangerous crank, but feared to cross him in any manner and therefore a full attendance was recorded once each week when Delaney called together his "school" for the preaching of the doctrine of hate.

One day while Delaney was denying and defying God, a large boulder rolled down from the mountain and killed two Indians who were squatted on the ground in front of him, listening to their weekly lesson of hate. Immediately the remaining Indians began to wail and proclaim the Manitou was seeking vengence. Delaney shot two of the Indians closest to him and at the point of his gun compelled the entire band to kneel down and deny God.

A week later Joe Peltier, renegade, brought a half breed squaw to the camp as his wife. It was permissible to bring squaws, but Peltier's wife was almost white. Delaney met her in the camp and summoned her and Peltier before him on the

large, natural ampitheatre on the hillside where the school of hate was always held.

Peltier pleaded that he be allowed to keep his squaw, that she was more Indian than white. Delaney, as an answer to the pleadings, shot the woman down in cold blood and then turned the weapon on Peltier, dealing him the same fate for disobedience to the rules, in bringing a "white" woman to the camp.

From that day forward Delaney was complete master over the lives of his men. They were his slaves — slaves who feared their master — and as such they worshipped him.

CHAPTER III

Mariana Modena

The history of the West is written into the characters of those who builded the first foundation of primitive civilization and years are but incidents in that trail that leads over the great divide toward that sunset of a dying day, over which traveled the Redman, before the vanguard of the white menace, that came to usurp and commercialize the hunting grounds of the nomadic tribes of warriors.

The years flew quickly for Namaqua, who had grown to happy, care-free girlhood and in her heart was instilled a love for the eternal hills and for the peaceful valleys over which roamed the deer and buffalo. An unwritten law, prompted by strategy, guided the actions of Delaney who confined his operations to attacks on immigrant trains, while the haunts of the peaceful Indians were kept free from invasion by his renegade band. A sacred truce existed which Delaney faithfully kept.

Another April brought out the first flowers of

Spring time and the valley was scented with the sweet fragrance of the tiny buds that opened their eyes to the morning sunlight, as Namaqua walked toward the Overland trail, as was her custom, in hope of catching a glimpse of passing strangers. With all her great love for the out of doors and the beauty of nature and her happy disposition, there was something sad about the expression in her hazel eyes, sometimes as blue as the sky that smiled down on her garden of Eden. An unknown secret hidden away in her heart, held a longing for companionship and a romance bloomed with her girlhood unsatisfied by association with her Indian brothers.

She gazed along the trail toward the rising sun. A lone rider was silhouetted against the horizon, a dim spectre on the winding trail that leads, from Namaqua, out to the great unknown. Her heart gave a wild leap of joy.

"I wonder what he is like," she said aloud and then laughed gleefully when startled by the sound of her own voice, that echoed through the stillness of the morning air. The lone rider spurred his horse onward and into the life of this angel of the valley, rode the most picturesque figure of the olden West — Mariana Modena.

Namaqua was disappointed. Instead of her knight gallant of which she had often dreamed, and man of giant frame and features of Apollo, she saw a short, squatty figure dismount from his horse. He removed his hat and bowed with the courtesy of a Spanish cavalier. Modena was a Spaniard, with a trace of Indian blood in his veins. He wore a blanket coat gaily ornamented with silk, and in his hand, as he slid down from his horse, he clutched his trusty rifle, an associate which he always kept with him, and which stood him well in hand in previous scouting expeditions with Kit Carson, Jim Baker, and other noted frontier scouts. (This is true)

"You're a mighty pretty little squaw," Modena said by way of opening the conversation. "What is your name? What may I call you?"

Namaqua flushed underneath her deep coat of tan which nature had painted on her cheeks with the same skill as heredity had painted the cheeks of her sister associates.

"My name is Namaqua," she replied, as she smiled sweetly at the queer looking little man, who seemed to her neither white nor Indian.

"That's a pretty name! I am going to build my home here and I shall call it Namaqua in your

honor. I am going to ride up to yonder hill and all the land I can see from that point shall be mine. I shall name the hill Mariana Butte, in honor of myself, so that it will always be associated with the beautiful name 'Namaqua.' I am Mariana Modena."

The Spaniard was as good as his word. He rode to the top of the hill and solemnly proclaimed all the vast empire, as far as his eyes could scan as his domain.

Namaqua walked back to her home at the Devil's Backbone. Her heart was filled with conflicting emotions. She admired the audacity of the little stranger in coolly mapping out his empire, but she vaguely wondered how Dan Delaney would take the advent of another permanent settler.

Modena soon made friends with the Indians, and, with their aid, erected the first log cabin in the valley, which he named Namaqua. Beside it he built a stone fort. His experience with Indians and renegade white bands of marauders had taught him that caution was the best policy and Modena was always prepared.

He was highly educated and spoke fluently thirteen languages. His home soon became a

stopping place for immigrants passing over the Overland trail on their way to California. Modena was not long to be left alone in his empire. The wild dream of adventure in the heart of youth and of the east, brought to the Big Thompson valley Lucas Brandt, whom Modena employed as his clerk, for he established at his home a store, and a bar. Other pioneers came over the trail and enamoured by the beauty of the valley, remained permanently. Among those were William B. Osborn, his wife and son Milo. And Mrs. Osborn became the first white woman settler in the valley.

In addition to these the settlement in the valley consisted of the following white settlers: Jud Smith family, sons James, Sherman, and Charles C.; David Notman; Thos. Sprague and family; Abner Sprague; Wm. A. Bean and family; Thos. H. Johnson; John Baxter; Will and Jud Brush; Bruce Johnson; G. S. Hill; Frank Gard; Thos. Cross and family; Baer brothers; John and Jim Maddock; Andrew Douty; Archie and George Little; John E. Washburn; John J. Ryan; J. D. Bartholf and family, son Frank; Andrew McCarthy; Jefferson Kilburn; Andrew Blackhurst; Joseph Clendennen; Jud Warner; Ed. D. Clark

Hiram J. Tadder; Bruce Woodard; John Barrett, and C. D. Graham.

Namaqua was situated on the immigrant trail from Arkansas to California and Oregon and became a station of the Overland stage line.

Tell about bridge - only one for miles to cross the river

#1

CHAPTER IV

Modena Acquires a Family

The smoke that curled from the chimney of the cabin of Mariana Modena was regarded as a menace to the dignity of Joe Papa. It was the sign of coming civilization to the valley and a challenge of the supremacy of Papa to an empire he claimed by right of discovery. The wily, wandering Frenchman, however, had no idea of disputing the claims of Modena. With the wanderlust clutching at his heart, halted by his reluctance to leave his family alone, Papa walked into the bar room of the Modena cabin one morning and offered to trade Modena his wife "John," and family, which included Namaqua and Louis for six head of ponies. Modena hesitated for a moment, then countered by offering Papa four ponies.

"It's a trade," the Frenchman agreed, "and you got damn fine bargain."

Thus "John" became the wife of Mariana Modena and was subsequently married by a missionary clergyman, and the family moved from the

home at the Devil's Backbone to Namaqua — and Joe Papa passed out of the life of the valley.

The Overland stage rolled into Namaqua station with the horses on the dead run. Joseph A. Slade, superintendent of the stage division, was in the driver's seat. The reins were tightened with a jerk and the horses thrown back on their haunches as the stage came to a halt. Persons loitering around the station, who knew Slade best scooted for cover, when they realized that the most notorious killer and gun man in the West was drunk.

Namaqua was brewing coffee over a fire near the cabin as Frank G. Bartholf stepped out of the station to unhitch the horses and received his first introduction to Slade, who leaping from the driver's seat drew his revolver, and using it for a club knocked young Bartholf to the ground.

Namaqua, frightened and horrified, ran behind the cabin and peeked around the corner of the building. It was her first evidence of brutality displayed by a white man and in her heart she had always cherished the belief that the whites were the favored children of God, from that great land just beyond the horizon.

She saw Slade step to the coach door and heard

him order the passengers to alight and horrified she saw him jerk a frightened woman to the ground. As the woman screamed hysterically, a frail young man leaped from his seat in the coach and with the fury of a wild cat attacked Slade.

Slade knocked him to the ground, drew his gun, but never fired the shot. For Like a flash Namaqua dashed from her hiding place, snatched up the driver's whip, that had fallen to the ground and brought the stinging lash with full force across Slade's face. Her eyes flashing defiance, she sprang between Slade and his fallen victim and ordered the ruffian to put up his gun.

Slade looked at her in astonishment, placed the gun in his belt and started for the bar, hesitated at the door for a moment as though debating whether or not to enter the place. Slade knew Mariana Modena, and while being a killer and gun man, was a coward at heart. Had he known Modena was not at home that day, he would probably have entered, but he turned abruptly, gathered up the reins, jumped into the seat and drove rapidly away, leaving his passengers behind him. And had Modena been at home he would have, no doubt, saved the vigilance committee at Virginia City the trouble of hanging Slade later.

Photo by Harold M. Dunning, Loveland, Colo.

THE KEYHOLE IN THE "DEVIL'S BACKBONE"
where Namaqua spent her babyhood. Six miles northwest of Loveland, Colorado

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Namaqua watched for a moment the retreating stage, then turning to the man whose life she had saved, she saw the girl passenger kneeling beside him.

The man smiled faintly. "You're a plucky girl," he said, addressing Namaqua, "and I will never be able to repay you for saving my life. We might as well have a formal introduction even though our first meeting was rather informal.

"I am Jack Sailsbury and this is —" he paused as he gazed into the eyes of the girl kneeling beside him — "I beg pardon," he said, "but I believe we have never been introduced."

"I am Sally Lee," the girl replied.

"And whom have we the pleasure to meet?" Jack asked, turning to Namaqua. "I confess that I never expected to find a white girl living in this wilderness."

Namaqua flushed. "My name is Namaqua," she said, and then added sadly, "I am not a white girl. I am Indian. But let me help you into the cabin and get you something to eat. You must be hungry after your long ride."

When Sally Lee was so unceremoniously unloaded at Namaqua station, it was not her intention to remain there. She was on her way to

California, where she planned to make her home with an uncle, but the stage had driven off and left her and for the time being she became the guest of Namaqua, whose heart brimmed full of joy at the privilege of entertaining this beautiful white girl; and in the days that followed, as the two girls roamed around the valley and up and down the silver stream of the Big Thompson, the friendship of the white girl for Namaqua became strong, while the feelings of Namaqua for her white sister turned almost to worship. And in her feeling of security and peace at this cabin in the Westland, Sally little dreamed that the murderer of her father, Dan Delaney, continued his school of hate in the mountains, a few miles to the west.

Jack Sailsbury had also planned on seeking health and fortune on the Pacific coast. He had closed his art studio in New York City, because of ill health, and was determined to make a fig for life in the bracing atmosphere of the ope country. He was an artist of exceptional abilit and saw in this mountain region a wonderfu opportunity to exploit his ability.

When the next stage coach rolled into the sta tion, however, Sailsbury was ready to continu

his journey to California, but when he discovered that Sally, at the pleadings of Namaqua, had decided to wait for the following stage, he suddenly changed his mind and decided to remain also. He had developed a keen interest in the fair-haired Sally Lee — and in Namaqua, the olive-skinned beauty of the Westland, who had saved his life.

CHAPTER V

General U. S. Grant

The days rolled by quickly for Namaqua. Having been schooled diligently by Mariana Modena since their first meeting, she had learned rapidly of the things that lay beyond the borders of her little world. Mariana had taken keen interest in his "little white squaw," as he used to call her, and being highly educated, he was competent to teach her from his meager supply of books and the wondrous store of knowledge that earlier training and later experience had interwoven with his life.

The coming of Sally Lee into Namaqua's life was a stepping stone for her greater achievement and Jack Sailsbury to her was almost divine. She loved Sally and admired Jack and above all longed for the respect of the young artist. Her heart often ached when she realized, that with all Jack's courtesy and attentions toward her, she detected that the color line was a mark of distinction in the eyes of the artist between herself and Sally. Several stages had come and gone and Sally and

Jack still remained as guests at Namaqua. They had learned to love the valley and the mountains and were in no hurry to take their departure for the portals of the Pacific West.

The spring months had passed away. July was ushered in and in the heat of the noonday sun a stage coach again halted in front of the stage depot. Lucas Brandt was building a corral in which to house the stock, Jack Sailsbury was using his art in a material way by aiding in the construction, and Sally and Namaqua were offering suggestions, kindly received by the builders, but little heeded because in their own minds the workers felt the mastery of man over womanhood in the matter of construction.

Mariana rushed out to the partly constructed corral. "Namaqua," he said kindly, his eyes twinkling with delight, "come in quickly! We have guests. Men whom you have been studying, whom I have told you about. You will probably never see such another sight." Namaqua quickly entered the cabin, followed by her companions. She stood in the center of the room and gazed in admiration at the bright uniforms and shoulder straps worn by two officers of the United States army. Then her cheeks flushed and her eyelids

drooped in embarrassment as she realized that the two men were returning the gaze.

She would have liked to have retreated from the ordeal of an introduction, but when she saw how graciously calm Sally met the two distinguished men, and in gazing slyly in the direction of Jack, his eyes met hers and she seemed to read therein the admonition: "Go on, Namaqua, you're just as good as the best of them," with the natural grace, born in her heart, she clasped the hands of General U. S. Grant and General William T. Sherman.

The two generals, accompanied by Schuyler Colfax, were making a trip over the Overland trail to Denver. The Civil War had been successfully fought and General Grant had just been nominated for president of the United States, but had not yet been elected. William B. Osborn, a personal friend of Colfax, had received a letter from Colfax telling him of the day they expected to arrive at the Namaqua post, and Mr. and Mrs. Osborn drove from their valley homestead that morning with a yoke of oxen to meet the distinguished guests.

"Better keep tab on the stock, Milo," Mr. Osborn cautioned his young son, as he and his wife pulled out from the homestead that morning

"and don't let them stray too far from home." Roving Indians had been raiding the ranches of late and many head of stock belonging to the settlers had vanished.

Milo was a dutiful son but the lure of the great white warriors was too great for him to withstand and as the party left the cabin and strolled out into the open to view the wonderful landscape, two eyes, belonging to a husky young American kid, were pressed tightly against a knot-hole on the opposite side of the corral, and a youthful heart beat a tattoo as his eyes beheld the stately stride of the two great conquerors and generals of the United States army.

The stage coach carrying the official party remained for the night at Namaqua. In the cool of the evening Jack Sailsbury, with brush in hand, traced the finishing touches of a picture he had been working on for many days.

The two generals walked out to where the artist was at work and looked over his shoulder as he dipped his brush for the final touch. "That is a wonderful picture, young man!" General Sherman said, "but isn't it rather strange, with all the wondrous landscapes, you would use your talent on painting a picture of this kind?"

"Inspirations come from things we love,"

replied Jack. "I do love the mountains and paint them often, but love has a wonderful wide scope and I always paint the things I love the most."

Namaqua, nearby, overheard the remark and her heart gave a leap of joy, for the picture was that of her and Sally. But her heart received the dagger of remorse when she heard Jack say:

"Isn't it too bad this girl isn't white? She is really the more beautiful of the two!"

"She probably is white," General Grant remarked. "The outside coloring has little to do with the whiteness of character and the soul."

"You're right, General," Jack replied. "She is the most wonderful girl I have ever known and I think I have painted my masterpiece."

Namaqua again felt a thrill tugging at her heart, but the pain experienced by Jack's former remark could not be stilled. "Oh God," she murmured as she silently stole away, "why did you instill in my heart such a great love for civilization and all that it means to me, and place the blood of an Indian in my veins?"

CHAPTER VI

Mexican Joe

"Something is going to happen, Joe! I don't like the looks of those fellows circling the wagons! I am sure it is a part of Delaney's band." The speaker was Louis Papa, foster brother of Namaqua, who while still in his teens, had developed an almost uncanny efficiency as a scout. The man addressed was known only as Mexican Joe and was an employee of Modena.

An immigrant train was traveling slowly across the valley unmindful of the menace that skulked behind the encircling hills. From their point of vantage on top of Mariana Butte, Louis and Joe watched the wagon train heading for the death trap.

"You Indian breed, Louis; me Mexican breed. Delaney men most all white and bad as devil. People in wagons white too; maybe women and little fellows. Shall we let white men murder white men? Better I ride back to cabin and get help."

"Too late to ride back to cabin! Let's go fight

them," Louis replied. These were the only words spoken but the two understood each other fully. They were willing to die if need be in defense of the white strangers and the women and children whom they had never seen. This was the spirit of the West and the men who conquered it.

Joe and Louis mounted their horses and rode rapidly toward the west to a point where the Big Thompson river winds around a mountain of red boulders piled high toward the skyline. A troop of horsemen swooped down upon the defenseless train. Quickly the men in the wagons gathered around the train, rifles in hand, to give battle to the foe. It was an unequal struggle for the immigrants. It was also an unequal chance that Louis and Joe took when they charged boldly upon the marauders, after discovering their hiding place was out of range of battle and their rifles were ineffectual from that distance.

Gradually the lines around the wagons crumpled as the desperadoes concentrated their fire upon the train, paying no heed to the two dauntless warriors who circled them, pouring their shots with deadly effect upon the Delaney band. A rushing charge was made upon the train and the battle was over, with every member of the

immigrant crew slain. The bandits then turned in united fury upon Louis and Joe who realizing the battle lost turned to flee amid a rain of bullets.

Side by side these two rode with the enemy in hot pursuit, until Joe swayed in his saddle and fell to the ground. Louis slid from his saddle and firing a shot of defiance at the oncoming foe, bent over the form of his comrade to lift him to his own horse, that stood stock still as though he understood that his master needed him sorely.

"Go, Louie! Ride, for God sake, like the devil! I am done for," Joe murmured, then gasped and died in Louis' arms.

Louis jumped on his horse and did ride like the devil. The pursuers soon halted, feeling they were getting too close to the fort of Modena. They halted not a moment too soon. Scarcely had they turned to ride for their mountain retreat, stopping at the wagons to gather their loot, when Louis dropped limply from his saddle, weakened from loss of blood and with a leg and arm shattered and riddled with bullets.

For hours he lay out in the blazing sun and when he regained consciousness his faithful horse was still standing beside him. Mustering his strength he climbed into the saddle and with

his uninjured hand tightly grasping the saddle horn, he said, "Go on, Star-Face, carry me home."

Jack, Sally, and Namaqua were partaking of their afternoon tea that Namaqua had brewed over a fire beside the cabin as Star-Face, carrying his gruesome burden, walked leisurely toward them. The horse seemingly realized that to trot or gallop would shake from the saddle the precious passenger.

At the sight of the blood-besmeared rider, Sally screamed and fainted, but Jack and Namaqua caught Louis as he released his grip on the saddle horn and fell from the horse.

They carried him toward the cabin and Modena, hearing Sally scream, rushed out and met them.

It was an hour before Louis again became conscious and was able to tell what had happened.

Leaving Louis in the tender care of Namaqua and Sally, who by this time had regained her composure, Modena with Lucas Brandt and Jack Sailsbury, mounted their horses and rode toward where the wrecked train was scattered along the trail. The bodies of the dead had been carried away. It was the rule of Delaney that no one

should ever claim his dead, or the dead victims of his depredations. He always took them to his mountain home where they were cremated. No mounds or graves were ever left to tell the story of his murders. On this special occasion, however, Delaney had a lesson to teach Modena, for the acts of the settlers in daring to oppose his rule, or to contest his action in attacking trains that passed through the valley.

The body of Mexican Joe was found lying where he fell, horribly mutilated and the scalp of the man who had given his life for others was hanging on a bush nearby and pinned to it was a paper bearing the inscription, hastily scrawled:

"So be it to all who oppose my RULE. — Delaney."

The three men wrapped the body of Mexican Joe in a blanket and bore it to the stage post. Archie Little, carpenter of the colony and official casket maker, made a coffin and the following morning Joe was buried near the foot of Mariana Butte and given a Christian burial with W. B. Osborn preaching the funeral sermon.

Following the funeral, Modena hastily sent word to the settlers, asking them to come to the stage post at once. When they had gathered he

told them of his determination to visit Delaney.

"I might not come back," he said, "and if I don't you will know that it is well for you to stay here and prepare to defend yourselves."

No one attempted to dissuade him. They all knew Modena and that when he made up his mind to do a certain thing he always carried out his desire.

The following morning Modena rode alone toward the mountains and at the noon hour, with his Hawkins rifle slung across the bow of his saddle, rode boldly into the camp of Delaney.

Delaney strode out to meet him, while the bandit gang crowded in silence around the two leaders.

"I never had the pleasure of personally meeting you before," Modena began, "but I felt it necesary to do so. I am Mariana Modena and I figure you are Dan Delaney."

"You figure right, Modena; what can I do for you?"

"I just rode over to tell you that this country isn't big enough for you and me. One of us must move out and I don't calculate much on going."

Delaney smiled grimly. "I thank you, Modena, for the courtesy of calling. You are a comical

looking little individual but I kind of believe you mean what you say. We might just as well end this conversation abruptly, however. I am not going to leave the country. What do you propose to do about it?"

"Just this, Delaney! As long as you stay in the mountains, it suits me. But don't you, or any of your men, ever come to the valley again, or ever attack another train. If you do, there will be war."

One of Delaney's men grasped a revolver from his belt as though he would shoot down Modena, but before he could draw he was weltering in his own blood. Delaney had shot him.

"That's the way I serve people who disobey my commands," he said to Modena. "Now you ride back to the valley. We will not molest you here! You are too brave a man to be shot down in cold blood. But I want you to realize that my men and I are coming down to the valley whenever we please and if this means war you had better prepare yourselves."

"It means war," Modena replied, as he turned and rode back toward Namaqua.

CHAPTER VII

Battle of Namaqua

Upon Modena's return to the post he ordered all the stock placed in the corral that had just been completed by Brandt and Jack and made preparations to withstand a siege.

"Delaney will attack us before another sunset," he told the people. The little stone fort was not large enough to house all the settlers and this, being the safest place, was fixed to accommodate the women, with a sufficient number of men to man the portholes and give battle to the attackers.

The balance of the men planned to seek shelter in the cabin and make a defense from this point. The two buildings stood but a few feet apart. Guns and amunition were made ready and the little settlement calmly awaited the inevitable battle.

The dawn came in red and beautiful the next morning, tracing its wonderful colors on the mountain peak where Delaney had called his band together for their lesson of hate, where he again preached to them his sing-song story:

"There is no God! There is no Love."

"The time has come," he told them, "when we must wipe out Modena and the settlement in the valley. It is no longer safe for us to attack the wagons along the trail with this menace staring us in the face. We might just as well have it over with and today is the time to strike."

Sally was huddled closely in the arms of Namaqua, frantic with fear, with Namaqua vainly trying to comfort her as the army of bandits with their weapons gleaming in the morning sunlight rode across the valley toward the fort.

Jack Sailsbury was standing at one of the portholes of the fort with his determined jaw set, and grimly clutching his rifle. Modena had given orders not to shoot until the foe came within easy range.

"We have no ammunition to waste," he told the men.

The seasoned pioneers of the valley knew how to obey orders, but Jack Sailsbury, unused to the ways of the new civilization into which fate had thrust him, was anxious for the fray. He picked his man, drew down on him and fired. The bandit pitched forward and tumbled to the ground. With a fierce shout, the bandits dashed toward the fort and the battle was on.

At the first sound of firing Sally again lapsed into unconsciousness, but Namaqua was too busy now to care for her, and with other women in the fort, busied herself in loading the rifles for the men. Mariana, with his old Hawkins rifle, stood at a window in the log cabin and made every shot tell.

Sally opened her eyes slowly, having recovered from her swoon. She watched Namaqua loading rifles and darting from porthole to porthole exchanging weapons with the men. Suddenly the idea struck her as to what a useless person she was while the others were fighting against a foe that outnumbered them fifty to one. She hastily arose; all fear had left her. The smoke of battle was in her nostrils. She grasped a rifle and, loading it, handed it to Jack.

"You're a queen, Sally," he said.

Namaqua was just coming with another loaded gun for Jack but Sally had beaten her to it. She overheard Jack's remark and again her heart ached just a little. In spite of the din of battle she was conscious of the fact that love to a woman is greater than life itself.

The battle raged on through the day and into the night. The bandits were unable to penetrate

the cabin or the fort and were taking a heavy loss of life from the rifles of the settlers who had the advantage of being behind shelter, while the attackers were fighting in the open.

The bandits would withdraw from time to time and then renew the attack. Sally and Namaqua paused long enough from their labors of loading rifles, which they turned over to other women, to brew coffee for the fighting men. The two girls, in spite of the protests of the others, alternately dashed back and forth between the fort and the log cabin and served coffee and bread to the almost famished and tired fighters.

Toward morning the bandits withdrew for a few hours respite. Modena walked into the fort to count the cost. Not a single life had been lost among the settlers. Their barricades had served them well.

"We have them whipped!" Jack enthusiastically shouted as Modena entered.

"Get that idea out of your head, boy! They're coming back and coming strong."

"We could hold them though, until hell freezes over, if we had enough ammunition. But that is our danger. It is already getting short."

"When they attack again," he continued, "we

must let them almost upon us before we fire. We cannot afford to waste a single shot. Remember this is a battle to death. Delaney never takes prisoners."

"Here they come," Jack shouted, and Modena rushed back to the cabin.

For hours the battle raged again and the ammunition in the fort and cabin became almost exhausted. The tired fighters grimly held to their posts although almost unable to stand from sheer exhaustion.

Namaqua brewed another pot of coffee and started across the opening, then screamed and sank to the ground. A bandit's bullet had reached its intended goal. Jack dropped his rifle and deserting his post, ran out and grasping Namaqua in his arms, carried her into the fort.

Sally quickly took up Jack's fallen rifle and taking his place at the porthole continued to fire at the onrushing band. She had fired the last shot in the fort. The ammunition was exhausted. She turned from her position at the porthole in time to see Jack holding Namaqua in his arms, and saw him kissing her tenderly, murmuring words of endearment into ears that heard him not.

She turned again to the porthole. It was

her turn to experience a pain tugging at her heart.

Gazing across the valley, she gave a cry of joy. In a dust cloud, she saw a troop of men attacking the Delaney band from the rear, and she saw the bandits break and flee toward the mountains.

James Nugent, known as "Mountain Jim," Griff Evans, and Hugh McDermott, settlers in the Estes Park region, heard the sound of battle in the early morning air and gathering a band of friendly Indians and the few settlers of that territory, they had swooped down from the mountains to the relief of Namaqua.

"Hello, Modena," Nugent said as he walked into the cabin. "Need me much?"

"Hello, Jim," Modena replied. "Yes, glad you came," and that was the only greeting between the two veterans of the west, who took their daily occurrences as a matter of course and never became the least excited, even in the face of death.

"Well, I'll be blowed!" drawled Mountain Jim, "what's this coming?"

They looked across the valley and riding toward them was Delaney.

"I'm going to shoot the skunk," said Jim.

"No, don't do it, Jim," Modena replied. "He

Page numbering error. The problem with text.

had a chance to shoot me once and didn't. Let's hear what he has to say."

Delaney rode up to the cabin. "Modena," he said, "you have me beaten today, but not whipped. I'm going to visit you again some time. But I have a request to make. Let some of my men come back here with me to carry away our dead. We will come unarmed. It will save you the trouble of digging graves."

"All right, take the skunks away. I don't want them," Modena agreed. And Delaney carted away his dead to the mountains for cremation.

"Besides being a good fighter, that fellow is crazy," Lucas Brandt put in.

"Mebby so!" said Mountain Jim.

"Wounded bad?" inquired Jim, as he bent over the cot on which Namaqua was lying, and where Jack and Sally were tenderly dressing her wound.

Namaqua smiled faintly. "Just a slight wound in the shoulder. I'll be all right in a short time."

Turning to Sally, Mountain Jim said, "By the way, Miss, when your friend gets well, bring her and that young man to our mountain home at Estes Park. I don't mean to my home — I'm a bachelor, but Griff Evans has a lady guest at his

home now who I am sure would be glad to meet someone from civilization. Her name is Bird — Isabella Bird — a novelist from England, who came here to get color for her novels, and is finding plenty of it, though some of it I fear is drab, without feminine associations other than Mrs. Evans, who is busy most of the time trying to keep enough chuck ahead for us hungry men."

"That will be delightful," Sally assured Jim. "We'll be glad to come."

"I'll stop on my way home in the first canon and send Dr. Hutchinson to treat this wounded girl," Jim said. "Perhaps you are not aware that you have a physician so close to your settlement.

"He has given up practice. Kind of a queer sort of chap. But guess he will answer an emergency call like this. Another Englishman, so he is. They are getting thick in this neck of the woods now. Don't know what the idea is of an educated man like Hutchinson burying himself and family out here in the mountains, with seemingly no aim in life. But I reckon that's his business. Well, I must be going! Come on Evans. So long, folks!"

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CHAPTER VIII

Dr. Francis Blake Hutchinson

That evening a tall, handsome, six-foot Englishman, carrying a medicine case entered the cabin at Namaqua. He introduced himself as Dr. Francis Blake Hutchinson, and quickly set about to give relief to the suffering girl.

"How long you been in this country?" asked Modena. "I was not aware there was a physician within many miles."

"Not very long, Modena," the doctor replied.

"Got a family?" Modena asked.

"Yes."

"Going to stay here long?"

"Perhaps."

"Where do you get your supplies? Your food? You never come down to the store."

"I raise them, Modena."

"This girl will be all right in a very short time," the doctor cut in, as though eager to shut off Modena's flow of questions. "It won't hurt her in the least to get out in the fresh air, and will perhaps do her worlds of good. A horseback ride

in company with someone who will look after her, especially a ride in the morning air, will help to relieve the pressure on her shattered nerves."

Looking toward Jack, the doctor smiled and added: "You understand the directions, do you not?" Jack reddened but agreed that he did.

When the doctor smiled, Sally thought she had never seen a more handsome man.

Turning to Sally, the physician said: "We would be delighted, Miss, to have you call on us. Mrs. Hutchinson gets lonely up there in the mountain home at times and she longs for old time associations back in England. A visit with a woman of culture, like you, will do her heart good. Won't you come some day? I will bring an extra horse the day after tomorrow, when I return to see my patient and would be delighted to have you accompany me home."

"I do not like to leave Namaqua when she is ill," Sally replied, "but I would love to go."

"Oh, if Miss Namaqua is the only one you are loath to leave," the doctor said, smilingly, looking squarely into Sally's eyes, "you need not worry. She is getting along famously."

Sally drooped her eyelids and it was evident she would have given almost anything she pos-

sessed could she have kept back the blush that crept into her cheeks.

Jack turned and looked through the little cabin window across the vast stretch of country reaching away toward the mountains. His heart was torn with conflicting emotions that he was unable to understand.

Morning again dawned clear and bright. Jack stepped into the cabin to inquire about Namaqua. Sally was seated beside the cot. When Jack entered, she placed a finger to her mouth as if to command silence, then tip-toed from the room, followed by Jack.

"I think it is better to allow Namaqua to sleep a while before disturbing her," Sally told Jack. "She talked much in her sleep last night, Jack, and did not rest well — and Jack! She talked mostly about you!"

"Isn't this a glorious morning, Sally," Jack countered. "What do you say if we ride over to Mariana Butte and scale the peak? There is a wonderful view of the valley from the mouth of the cave at the crest of the hill."

"That would be splendid," Sally agreed.

As they rode toward the lone sentinel of the valley, they passed a little mound by the trail.

"I would like to know the history of the person buried there," Sally said. "Did Modena ever tell you, Jack?"

"Yes! That is the grave of H. L. W. Peterson and the story of a wonderful love that ended in tragedy.

"Peterson, 24 years old, accompanied by his sweetheart, started across the Overland trail from the east land, bound for California, to regain his health. Just like I started out, Sally. They planned to be married in the golden West, when health was restored. When enroute the stage coach stopped here while the driver repaired a break. Peterson walked a short distance from the coach, drinking in the beauty of the mountains to the west. The sky was somewhat overcast and a storm approaching. Peterson was killed by a bolt of lightning. He was buried here by the trail, and his sweetheart continued the lonely journey to the west coast, but her heart, Sally, lies buried in this grave.

"What a pity the fellow didn't live. He would not have had long to wait before claiming his bride. Just look, Sally, what the West has done for me! Wasn't I a frail piece of humanity when that desperado beat me the day we landed here?

I wouldn't mind meeting the ruffian now. I don't think I would have to suffer the humiliation of hiding behind the skirts of a woman for protection."

"I wonder, Jack — I have made up my mind, you know, to go to California soon — if I too, shall leave my heart buried in Colorado?"

Jack reached for her hand and holding it in his for a moment said: "You're not going to leave us, are you, Sally? We can't get along without you. What did you mean, Sally, when you spoke of leaving your heart buried here?"

Sally looked frankly into his eyes, although the expression "we," that Jack used, caused her heart a touch of pain.

"Oh, there are so many things I love here, Jack! The mountains, the valley, Namaqua, Modena and — What do you say, Jack, if we place a headstone at this grave?" Sally cut in quickly.

The conversation was taking a turn she did not wish it to take. She loved Jack but was confident he loved Namaqua and that Namaqua loved him and her loyalty to the girl would not permit her to allow Jack to make love to her, which she felt would break Namaqua's heart.

Jack rode back to the cabin and procuring a

hammer and chisel returned to the grave where Sally waited. On the surface of a flat rock, Jack carved deeply the inscription:

H. L. W. Peterson
Age 24
Killed by Lightning, June 13, 1854.

Sally took the chisel and carved faintly below: "If time heals the heart of disappointed love, time will also obliterate this inscription."

"We'll have to go back to the cabin, Sally," Jack said. "Namaqua must be awake by this time. We will have to forbear our trip to the cave this morning."

"Jack, you're a wonderful lover," Sally laughed. "All the world loves a lover — and I am part of the world. You really couldn't stand it to be away from Namaqua for more than an hour, could you?"

"Sally, I can never marry Namaqua," Jack said, sadly. "She is Indian! I could never take her back to New York!"

Sally felt a thrill of hope in her heart at this declaration from Jack, and yet she resented that thrill. She loved Namaqua and felt the thrill was breaking faith with her.

"Don't ever go back to New York, Jack!" Sally said.

"Perhaps I won't," Jack replied, almost sadly, as they halted in front of the cabin.

CHAPTER IX

Sally Takes a Trip

The following day Dr. Hutchinson rode into the valley leading a spare horse behind his own mount.

After another examination and dressing of Namaqua's wound the physician pronounced the girl out of danger.

"All she needs now," the doctor told Modena, "is plenty of congenial company and a lot of fresh morning and evening air. The shock to her nervous system was severe and is more serious than the wound."

Sally walked across the room and kissing Namaqua tenderly said: "I am going away for a few days, Namaqua. Jack, I am sure, will find plenty of time between his paintings to bring the bloom back to your cheeks by long rides in the morning and evening air.

"I would not leave you, Namaqua, when you are ill, but I really think it is better for all of us. And then there is a lonely lady up in the mountains I am going to try and cheer. I will see you again very soon."

"If you remain away too long, Namaqua and I will come after you," Jack interrupted. "We will fear that you have fallen so deeply in love with the mountains that you have become fickle and forgotten the valley."

"There are things in the valley I can never forget. It has been wonderfully good to me," Sally answered.

"Better look out for that man Delaney," Modena cautioned, as Dr. Hutchinson and Sally mounted their horses preparatory to their departure for the mountain home.

"No danger of Delaney molesting me," the doctor said assuringly. "He and his men have ridden past my place many times but have never stopped or made any attempt to interfere with my farming operations; nor have they molested my stock in any way. I cared for one of Delaney's men once after he had been wounded and this probably accounts for his toleration of my ranch within the limits of what he terms his domain."

"I should like to meet Delaney," Sally laughingly shouted over her shoulder as she and the doctor rode away. "I think it would be wonderfully thrilling."

The two rode in silence for some time. Sally was lost in deep meditation and the doctor, wh

Photo by Harold M. Dunnlap, Loveland, Colo.

THE OLD STONE FORT

where the settlers fought off Delaney; taken more than half a century after. The trees were not there when the battle was fought. Three miles south and west of Loveland, Colorado

was a pretty good student of the human mind, did not disturb her thoughts.

Presently they came to a prairie dog village. As they approached each domicile in the village, the little reddish-brown sentinel perched upon its haunches, gave a short bark of warning to its mates, whisked its tail with a flourish, and dove into the hole in the center of the mound that marked the spot of each home.

A great big owl, blinking its lazy, moony eyes, perched on a mound in the center of the village.

Sally broke the silence. "I have often wondered, Doctor, why a bird credited with wisdom such as the owl, will waste its life mingling with that chattering throng of yelping, scolding animals that are not even beautiful to look at?"

The doctor smiled. "Perhaps," he replied, "if that wise old owl could talk he would express the same wonderment about you. In fact I am almost inclined to break down the bars of correct behavior, and allow my curiosity to rule, by asking you how you happen to remain in this wilderness? A flower such as you is a rare thing in the West."

It was Sally's turn to smile. "You don't seem to exactly fit in with the landscape yourself, Doctor," she countered.

"Well," he said, "at any rate we seem to understand each other and both have been spared a confession."

Sally laughed heartily and the musical ring of her laughter brought joy to the heart of this lonely doctor, who had given up civilization in answer to the call of adventure and found that adventure rather drab. But with the determination characteristic of the English race, he was not one to turn back. With advanced ideas of medical science he had come to this lonely spot to work out his theories and was one who would not be easily turned from his determination.

"I don't mind this lonely life so much, Sally! or pardon me! Miss Lee," the doctor continued. "I am busy with my medical research and study and with my farming operations. But it is terribly lonely for Mrs. Hutchinson and if it were not for the children I know she would never be able to stand it here. She would die of loneliness. But she is a game and wonderful woman, Miss Lee."

"Call me Sally, won't you, Doctor? Convention seems such a lost art out here on these prairies."

"Aside from your desire for knowledge, you

love your work, do you not, Doctor?" Sally asked.

"Indeed I do," he rejoined, "I love it!"

"And because you love it you are willing to spend the best part of your life out here in this wilderness, while the world and all that it should mean to a man of your breeding and intelligence lies over beyond that divide."

"Yes, Sally, that is true."

"What would you think, then, Doctor, of persons who deliberately run away from the thing they love? Who lack the courage to fight for the thing which they desire more than anything else in all the world?"

"Sometimes that is magnanimous," the doctor replied, "especially when it is done to save wounding the heart of a very dear friend."

"I am glad you are apt at spreading the cloak of charity, Doctor, because I am a coward. I am running away from the thing I love."

The doctor made no reply but he understood perfectly. His brief visits to the valley and short acquaintanceship with Sally, Namaqua, and Jack Sailsbury had convinced him of the tragedy of a triangular love affair as old as the world itself.

"Over yonder is my home, Sally," the doctor exclaimed.

Looking up the ravine which they had entered, Sally saw a picturesque cabin banked against a bulky mountain, that stood lazily and moodily colorful as it reached its ragged peak toward the fluffy white clouds that hung above the enchanted vale. She noticed that this cabin was different from any she had seen in the West because it was banked in vines that crept over the roof and flowers in profusion adorned the yard immediately in front and at the sides of the cabin.

They were met at the door by Mrs. Hutchinson. She held a little curly-headed baby in her arms, the first infant Sally had seen since coming to the valley.

When Mrs. Hutchinson smiled and spoke the words of gracious welcome to Sally, it was easy for her to understand how Dr. Hutchinson, even in a desert, could be happy, with such a mate. The river wound around the base of the mountain and encircled the cabin, keeping up its continuous melody of song. On the banks of the river two children were romping gleefully with a Swiss governess. The children, a boy and girl, were the son and daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Hutchinson and the governess had been a member of the household for many years, having come with the family from England.

Sally soon found herself at home with Mrs. Hutchinson, who was overjoyed by the chance visit of this cultured little maiden of Eastern civilization.

CHAPTER X

"Namaqua, I Love You"

Namaqua was up early the following morning. Her heart was filled with the glories and thrills that come with youth and love. The opportunity for a wonderful day alone with Jack had come to her. On the previous evening he had suggested an early morning ride.

The dawn had just peeked over the eastern horizon as they mounted their horses and rode over the favored trail along the river paralleling mountains.

At the base of Mariana Butte they halted where a sulphur spring bubbles from the hillside.

"Let us take a drink of this water," Namaqua urged. "You know, the medicine men of the Indian tribes claim this water is a cure-all for everything, and it might help to heal my wound."

"Do you think it will cure everything, Namaqua?" Jack asked.

"I don't know," she replied. "The Indian braves say so, but there are lots of things Indians claim that I do not believe."

"Do you believe everything white men say, Namaqua?" he asked.

"That depends," she smiled back at him. "What they say must be reasonable if I am to believe it."

"Supposing a person has a queer little pain in his heart and he stoops to take a drink of this water, do you think your medicine men would attempt to say it would cure that pain?" Jack queried. "I don't believe it," he said, "and am going to defy your gods by taking a drink."

She smiled and bent over the spring with him and together they took a deep draught of the health-giving water.

"The pain is still there," Jack said laughingly as he arose. "Your Indian gods have failed me."

"I broke the spell, Jack. That's why I bent over and drank with you.

"Didn't you ever hear the story of this spring?" she asked.

"No, Namaqua, let us have it. I am getting curious."

"Years and years ago," Namaqua began, "a white prince came riding over yon divide. He left his white sweetheart behind him in the land of his fathers, swearing to her everlasting devo-

tion. But he met an Indian princess here, with whom he became enamoured. He was struck by her physical beauty and made passionate love to her. She accepted him as a lover, and as they were going off to their tepee together, they paused and bent over this spring to drink. As their lips touched the water the reflection of the white girl the prince had left over the divide appeared before them in the water.

"The prince arose hastily. He suddenly realized his love was not for the Indian maid, but still attracted by her physical beauty, he sought to deceive her and attempted to explain the reflection in the water, making light of its significance. The princess ordered him to again bend over the spring with her. He did so and again the reflection of the white girl appeared in the water. Again the prince tried to explain, but each lie he told made the water bubble and boil and give forth the odor of sulphur and brimstone, and reading the record of his perfidy in the angry waters, the princess slew him.

"From that day forward the medicine men of the Indian tribes have used this spring to heal the sick. They call it the spring of truth."

"That's rather a weird story, Namaqua, and

almost gives one the creeps. Let us scale the mountain. I don't think it will hurt you and there is something up there I want to show you."

He took Namaqua by the arm and together they climbed the hill. At the southwest portion of the crest is a small cave and into the mouth of this cave Jack led Namaqua. Seated in this natural doorway, overlooking a most beautiful valley, where the river winds its silver thread among clusters of green and gold, Namaqua and Jack watched the morning sunlight play its colors upon the valley and then raise them to the mountain peaks, where the sparkling dew and silvery clouds were mingled with the purple glow, that a tardy moon had left behind in its haste to beat the first faint glow of dawn across the horizon.

"Namaqua," Jack began after a long silence, in which the two had drunk in the beauty of the morning, "I often come up here alone in the morning to witness this beautiful work of nature. There is nothing so beautiful to me as the wonders of the West. I am sick and tired of the city, and all the hustle and bustle of the world fighting for a right to livelihood.

"I am not a boy any longer, Namaqua. I have given this long and serious thought.

"You and I belong to different races. You are the most beautiful woman I have ever known, but if I should take you back to New York, my people would disown me, and would have nothing to do with you. It doesn't make much difference there about the heart and soul of womanhood. Money, fame, fortune is what counts and unless you are a member of the white race, and belong to that small clique that rules the society of that city, nothing else matters. If you are a member of that clique you can do almost anything and still remain in favor."

Namaqua sat as one in a dream, while Jack continued:

"That is why I am so sick of it all. That is why I never want to see New York again. I came out here, a physical wreck, and the West has been kind to me. I have regained my strength and health. I came out here also to paint some of the wondrous landscapes and found here pictures so beautiful that even I, whom New York claimed as one of her greatest artists, could not comprehend.

"I found here, away from the farce and humdrum of the social whirl, the most beautiful blossom that blooms any place, and it is a product of the West.

"I am never going back to New York again, Namaqua; I have said farewell, forever, to the land of my birth and early triumphs.

"Namaqua, I love you! I am asking you to be my wife."

Slowly she raised her eyes to his and her arms went around his neck in a fond embrace.

"I love you better than life itself, Jack," she murmured, "and we will be so happy together here alone, just you and I."

And then she added smilingly, "I knew you loved me after I tricked you to the 'Spring of Truth' this morning. The only reflection in the water, Jack, was yours and mine."

CHAPTER XI

"Rocky Mountain Jim"

Sally spent seven glorious days and nights at the Hutchinson home and then one morning the doctor piloted her through the canon, and across the mountains, to Estes Park, to pay the promised visit to the Evans' home at the invitation of "Mountain Jim."

Here she met the noted English lady whose name has found a place among those of the literary geniuses of the world — Isabella L. Bird. Here also he met the Earl of Dunraven, a titled Englishman who came to America, and across the plains, to Colorado, and founded a colony for titled folks in the sportsman's paradise surrounding Estes Park.

Sally found Miss Bird a plain and outwardly unattractive woman, whose charm consisted principally of her wonderful intellect, her free and easy command of the English language; and her interesting manner of discourse. Miss Bird belonged to one of the best families in England. "Rocky Mountain Jim" was an example of the

wildest of western life, yet Jim and Miss Bird soon became the greatest of friends. She spent most of her time with him and a great deal of her writings told of his exploits. In her writings she always pictured him as a savage, but a very likeable one, and there are those who say that a great love sprang up between the two so widely separated characters. Jim's appearance can best be described when you look at him through the eyes of a woman — especially a woman who admired him greatly, and of their first meeting Miss Bird wrote in a letter to her sister in England: "A very pretty mare, hobbled, was feeding; a collie dog barked at us, and among the scrub, not far from the track there was a rude black log cabin, as rough as it could be, to be a shelter at all, with smoke coming out of the roof and window. We diverged towards it; it mattered not that it was the home, or rather the den of a notorious ruffian and desperado. I longed to speak to some one who loved the mountains. I called the hut a den — it looked like the den of a wild beast. The big dog lay outside in a threatening attitude and growled. The mud roof was covered with lynx, beaver, and other furs laid out to dry, beaver paws were pinned out on the logs, a part of a car-

cass of a deer hung at one end of the cabin, a skinned beaver lay in front of a heap of peltry just within the door, and antlers of deer, old horseshoes lay about the den. Roused by the growling of the dog, his owner came out, a broad, thickset man, about middle height, with an old cap on his head and wearing a gray hunting suit, much worse for wear, a digger's scarf knotted 'round his waist, a knife in his belt, and a 'bosom friend,' a revolver, sticking out of the breast-pocket of his coat; his feet, which were very small, were bare, except for some dilapidated moccasins made of horse hide. The marvel was how his clothes hung together, and on him. The scarf around his waist must have had something to do with it. His face was remarkable. He is a man about forty-five, and must have been strikingly handsome. He has large grey-blue eyes deeply set, with well marked eyebrows, a handsome acquiline nose, and very handsome mouth. His face was smooth shaven except for a dense mustache. Tawny hair, in thin, uncared for curls, fell from under his hunter's cap and over his collar. One eye was entirely gone, and the loss made one side of his face repulsive, while the other might have been modeled in marble. 'De

perado' was written in large letters all over him. I almost repented of having sought his acquaintance. His first impulse was to swear at the dog, but on seeing a lady he contented himself with kicking him, and coming up to me he raised his cap, showing as he did so a magnificently formed brow and head, and in a cultured tone of voice asked if there was anything he could do for me. I asked for some water and he brought some in a battered tin, gracefully apologizing for not having anything more presentable. We entered into conversation and as he spoke I forgot both his reputation and appearance, for his manner was that of a chivalrous gentleman, his accent refined and his language easy and elegant. I inquired about some beaver paws which were drying, and in a moment they hung on the horn of my saddle. Apropos of the wild animals of the region, he told me that the loss of his eye was owing to a recent encounter with a grizzly bear, which after giving him a death hug, tearing him all over, breaking his arm and scratching out his eye, had left him for dead.

"As we rode away, for the sun was sinking, he said, courteously: 'You are not an American. I know from your voice that you are a country-

woman of mine. I hope you will allow me the pleasure of calling on you.' This was the man known through the territories and beyond them as 'Rocky Mountain Jim,' or more briefly as 'Mountain Jim,' and is one of the most famous scouts of the plains, and is the original of some of the daring portraits in fiction concerning Indian frontier warfare. So far as I have at present heard, he is a man for whom there is now no room, for the time for blows and blood in this part of Colorado is past, and the fame of many daring exploits is sullied by crimes which are not easily forgiven here. He now has a squatter's claim but makes his living as a trapper, and is a complete child of the mountains. Of his genius and chivalry to women there does not appear to be any doubt; but he is a desperate character and subject to 'ugly fits' when people think it best to avoid him. 'It is here regarded as an evil that he has located himself at the mouth of the only entrance to the Park, for he is dangerous with his pistols, and it would be safer were he not here.' His besetting sin is indicated in the verdict pronounced upon him by my host, Griff Evans, 'When he's sober, Jim's a perfect gentleman; but when he's had liquor, he's the most awful ruffian in Colorado.'"

And this is the man who was to be the companion and guide of Sally during her visit with Miss Bird, for Jim was the constant companion of the novelist and gave her some of the greatest material for her stories. Although he joined Evans in their attack on the Delaney band for the rescue of Namaqua, there was no love between the two men, and folks who knew them best, predicted that one day they would shoot out their differences — and that day seemed to be drawing nearer as the breach between the two men widened.

CHAPTER XII

Through Eyes of Love

Jack Sailsbury knew why Sally had accepted the invitation to leave the valley.

Men are not blind to the love of a woman and he realized that Sally loved him. Men are also prone to flattery and Jack was flattered because of the love of Sally, yet his heart ached when he realized that her great love must go forever unsatisfied.

He thought a great deal of Sally. In fact so much so that it took him a long time to decide to ask Namaqua to become his wife.

Once reaching the decision, however, he threw all the fire of his passionate artist soul into his love for Namaqua.

"Where are you going, Jack?"

Namaqua was speaking.

"Going over to take another peek into the Spring of Truth," Jack laughingly answered, as he packed his painting material.

Namaqua was just a trifle hurt when she saw Jack ride away without her, but she soon threw

off her depression and gave vent to a joyous heart by singing gaily at her work.

Riding to the spring, Jack dismounted and bending over the sparkling water, took a cool and refreshing drink. He gazed long and thoughtfully at the water and then mused half aloud:

"I can't see anyone but Namaqua, no matter where I look."

It was Jack's habit to talk aloud when working alone at his painting. He talked to the characters he traced on the canvass. They became a part of his existence and this morning he was again busy painting a picture of Namaqua. He had painted dozens of them since coming to the valley.

"Guess I can paint you without the living model before me," he said. "Just a little tint from the fading sunset to match the gloss of your cheeks. I do not need you here to trace the beauty of those wonderful hazel eyes.

"I cannot think of you, sweetheart, as an Indian maiden. God made you so different from the others. He placed on your cheeks the olive beauty of the fairest of Indian girls and gave you the dark raven tresses of your ancestors. But into those wonderful eyes, the window of your soul, He placed the greatest glory of all your matchless

splendor. At times they sparkle like the brightest star of heaven and then, again, they seem to carry a little touch of sadness, as I watch you dreaming, and I wonder what thoughts are toying at your heart as I see the changing mood as reflected in those eyes.

"I don't know just how to paint you this morning, Namaqua; whether to trace the happy, care free girl I so often see in you, as you flit about your work, singing sweeter than any bird I have ever heard; and your happy laughter, more musical than the rippling waters of the river that nightly lulls me to sleep.

"Or shall I paint you the way I saw you yesterday after you promised to be my wife. I saw you sitting there with your neck and arms bared, the most beautiful picture I have ever seen. Your eyes had taken on that expression I have been unable to read.

"You didn't know I was watching you, Namaqua, but in your dreaming, little girl, I saw you pass from girlhood to womanhood and your eyes took on that calm and serene expression of one who understood love in all its unselfish glory. Yes, Namaqua, I think I shall paint you as I saw you yesterday."

"Well, Jack Sailsbury, I was beginning to get jealous. I thought you were really talking to somebody, and here you were only talking about me," Namaqua interrupted as she threw her arms around his neck.

"How did you get here?" Jack asked. "I thought I left you at the cabin?"

"We just got word that Grandpa Langston is dying, Jack, and he wants to see me. Don't you want to go over with me and see if there is anything we can do for the poor old man, before he goes?"

Jack put away his painting and accompanied Namaqua to the home of Grandpa Langston, an aged resident of the valley, who loved Namaqua because of her many acts of kindness to him.

The eyes of Grandpa Langston beamed as Namaqua entered the room. She knelt by the bed and taking the hand of the dying man in hers said: "Did you wish to see me, Grandpa? You look so much better today.

"Yes, Namaqua, I wanted to talk to you. I am much better, little girl, and I am going home.

"You have been so wonderfully kind to me, an old man, who must have been a burden to you as you spent the precious hours of your youth in an

effort to cheer me, when there has been so much more congenial company."

"Nonsense, Grandpa," Namaqua replied, "you have been just the dearest friend to me and have given me so much good advice, that I know came right from your heart."

"That is what I wanted you for today, Namaqua. I wanted to give you just a little more advice before I leave you.

"You are young and beautiful, Namaqua. The valley is rapidly filling with white settlers. You will have many suitors. I just want to tell you, little girl, to be careful how you accept the attentions of those suitors. White men, as a rule, Namaqua, do not marry Indian girls. There is no white girl in the world half as wonderful as you, and yet, that color line is a stubborn thing to resist.

"I would not have you marry an Indian, Namaqua. I don't mean that. But be sure the man to whom you give your heart loves you, not because of your physical attractions, but because he truly desires you to become his wife and would not be ashamed to take you back East into the best of society. A person who would be ashamed to do that is a cad and a false lover."

Jack Sailsbury winced, and walked nervously forth and back across the room.

Namaqua, too, was uneasy. Had Jack not told her when he asked her to become his wife that he could not take her back East, but for the love of her he renounced all his former associates? She wondered if, in her maddened love for Jack, she was not asking of him too great a price. She wondered if it was fair to him.

Grandpa Langston's voice became weaker and his words could no longer be heard although his lips still moved.

Namaqua raised him up in her arms, where he peacefully died with a smile on his lips.

Another funeral was held from the stage station the following day. Lucas Brandt and associates dug a grave on a little knoll near the foothills, where Namaqua's friend and counsellor was placed for his eternal rest.

That evening Modena called Namaqua to him. He had heard the advice given her by Langston.

"Namaqua," he said, "do you love Sailsbury? Has he asked you to be his wife?"

"Yes, I love him. I am going to marry him. I cannot live without him."

"What would you do, Namaqua, if he married you and then left you?"

"Oh, I should die! I should die! but that could not be! Please tell me you know it couldn't. God would not permit that when I love him so."

"I like Jack, Namaqua, and I want you to understand that I do not object to him in the least. I want to be sure, that's all. For the sake of an old man who loves you, Namaqua, I want you to grant me just one request. I mean to test Jack's love.

"I am going to send you and your mother to the old home at the Keyhole, where you lived for so many years. I want you to go without bidding goodby to Jack and to remain away for a number of days. I will tell Jack after you are gone that I have sent you away for a quiet rest for a few days, because you are so broken up over the death of Grandpa Langston. I want to be satisfied in my own mind that he truly loves you, when your magnetic presence has been removed. Because you have beauty that few men can resist," and Modena chucked her under the chin.

Namaqua laughed heartily. "It will be a great lark," she said, "and I am going to accept your challenge." But her heart became heavy when

Modena added: "I want to see whether or no, Jack, in his loneliness, will go to Sally, in the mountains."

Before Jack arose the following morning, Namaqua and "John" departed for the Keyhole.

Direct quotes from I. Bird's book "A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains"
See pages 83-98

CHAPTER XIII

Scaling the Peak

Despite the fact that Sally was in the midst of the most entertaining company, the hours at times dragged heavily, for she had left her heart in the valley. She was becoming anxious to continue her journey to California. She knew it would be impossible for her to forget Jack, as long as she remained so near.

Miss Bird sat by the window of their cabin writing a letter, while Sally gazed dreamily at the moon that had just swung over the range from the valley below. Presently Miss Bird laid her pen aside.

"What is the matter, Miss Lee? What are you thinking about?"

"I was just wondering, Miss Bird, if life is really worth living. There are so many disappointments. Don't you think so?"

"You should mingle more with nature, Miss Lee, and not dream so much. There is nothing like nature to make one forget troubles and — mistakes. If it will not bore you, I will read you

a letter I have just written to my sister in England — a report of my trip with Mountain Jim and others up Long's Peak the other day."

"Oh, please read it to me, Miss Bird! I'd love to hear it!"

Miss Bird began to read while Sally listened attentively.

"No sort of description within my powers could enable another to realize the glorious sublimity, the majestic solitude, and the unspeakable awfulness and fascination of the scenes in which I spent Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Long's Peak, 14,255 feet high, blocks up one end of Estes Park, and dwarfs all the surrounding mountains. From it, on this side, rise snow born, the bright St. Vrain and Big and Little Thompson. By sunlight or moonlight its splintered gray crest is the one object which, in spite of wapiti and bighorn, skunk and grizzly, unfailingly arrests the eye. From it come all storms of snow and wind, and the forked lightnings play around its head like a glory. It is one of the noblest of mountains, but in one's imagination it grows to be much more than a mountain. It becomes invested with a personality. In its caverns and abysses one comes to fancy that it generates and chains the strong winds, to let them loose in its fury. The thunder becomes its voice, and the lightnings do it homage. Other summits blush

under the morning kiss of the sun, and turn pale the next moment; but it detains the first sunlight and holds it round its head for an hour at least, till it pleases to change from rosy red to deep blue; and the sunset, as if spellbound, lingers latest on its crest. The soft winds which hardly rustle the pine needles down here are raging rudely up there round its motionless summit. The mark of fire is upon it and though it has passed into grim repose, it tells of fires and upheaval as truly, though not as eloquently, as the living volcanoes of Hawaii. Here, under its shadow, one learns how naturally nature worship and the propitiation of the forces of nature arose in minds which had no better light.

"From the dry, buff grass of Estes Park we turned off up a trail on the side of a pine-hung gorge, up a steep pine-clothed hill, down to a small valley, rich in fine, sun-cured hay about eighteen inches high, and enclosed by high mountains whose deepest hollow contains a lily-covered lake, fitly named 'Lake of the Lilies.' Ah, how magical its beauty was, as it slept in silence, while there the dark pines were mirrored motionless in its pale gold, and here the great white lily cups and dark green leaves rested on amethyst-colored water!

"From this we ascended into the purple gloom of great pine forests, which clothe the skirts of the mountains up to a height of 11,000 feet, and from their solitary depths we had glimpses of

golden atmosphere and rose-lit summits, not of the 'land very far off' but of the land nearer now in all its grandeur, gaining in sublimity by nearness — glimpses, too, through a broken vista of purple gorges, of the illimitable plains lying idealized in the late sunlight, their baked, brown expanse transfigured into the likeness of a sunset sea rolling infinitely in waves of misty gold.

"The pines grew smaller and more sparse as we ascended, and the last stragglers wore a tortured, warring look. The timberline was passed, but yet, a little higher a slope of mountain meadow dipped toward the southwest toward a bright stream trickling under ice and icicles, and there a grove of beautiful silver spruce marked our camping ground. The trees were in miniature, but so exquisitely arranged that one might well ask what artist's hand had planted them, scattering them here, clumping them there, and training their slim spires toward heaven. Looking east, gorges opened to the distant plains, then faded into purple gray. Mountains with pine-clothed skirts rose in ranges or solitary, uplifted their grey summits, while close behind, nearly three thousand feet above us, towered the bald, white crest of Long's Peak, its huge precipice red with the light of a sun long lost to our eyes. Close to us in the cavern side of the peak, was snow, that owing to its position, is eternal. Soon the afterglow came on, and before it faded a big half moon hung out of the heavens, shining through the sil-

ver blue foliage of the pines on the frigid background of snow, and turning the whole into a fairyland.

"Unsaddling and picketing the horses securely, making the beds of pine shoots, and dragging up logs for fuel, warmed us. 'Jim' built up a great fire and before long we were all sitting round it at supper.

"'Treat Jim as a gentleman and you'll find him one,' I had been told; and though his manner was certainly bolder and freer than that of gentlemen generally, no imaginable fault could be found. He was very agreeable as a man of culture as well as a child of nature; the desperado was altogether out of sight. He was very courteous and even kind to me, which was very fortunate as the two young men in the party had little idea of showing even ordinary civilities. That night I made acquaintance with his dog 'Ring.' His master loves him, if he loves anything, but in savage moods mistreats him. 'Ring's' devotion never swerves, and his truthful eyes are rarely taken off his master's face. In a tone as if speaking to a human being, his master, pointing to me said: 'Ring, go to that lady and don't leave her again tonight.' Ring at once came to me, looked into my face, laid his head on my shoulders, and then lay down beside me, with his head on my lap, but never taking his eyes from 'Jim's' face.

"The long shadows of the pines lay upon the frosted grass; an aurora leaped fitfully, and the

moonlight, though intensely bright, was pale beside the red, leaping flames of our pine logs. 'Jim' sang one of Moore's melodies in a singular falsetto, and all together we sang 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and the 'Red, White, and Blue.' 'Jim' recited a very clever poem of his own composition, and told some fearful Indian stories. A group of small silver spruce away from the fire was my sleeping place. It was thickly strewn with young pine shoots, and these when covered with a blanket, with an inverted saddle for a pillow, made a luxurious bed. The mercury at 9 p. m. was twelve degrees below the freezing point. 'Jim' made a huge fire and stretched himself out beside it, but Ring lay at my back to keep me warm. I could not sleep, but the night passed rapidly. I was anxious about the ascent, for gusts of ominous sounds swept through the pines at intervals. Then wild animals howled, and Ring was perturbed in spirit about them. Then it was strange to see the notorious desperado, a red-handed man, sleeping as quietly as innocence sleeps. But above all it was exciting to lie there, with no better shelter than a bower of pines, on a mountain eleven thousand feet high, in the very heart of the ROCKY RANGE, under twelve degrees of frost, hearing sounds of wolves with shivering stars looking through the fragrant canopy, with arrowy pines for bed-posts and for a night lamp the red flames of a camp fire.

"Day dawned long before the sun rose, pure

and lemon colored. The rest were looking after the horses, when one of the students came running to tell me that I must come farther down the slope, for 'Jim' said he had never seen such a sunrise. From the chill, grey peak above, from the everlasting snows, from the silvered pines, down through mountain ranges with their depths of Tyrian purple, we looked to where the plains lay cold, in blue grey, like a morning sea against a far horizon. Suddenly, as a dazzling streak at first, but enlarging rapidly into a dazzling sphere, the sun wheeled above the grey line, a light of glory as when it was first created. 'Jim' involuntarily and reverently uncovered his head and exclaimed 'I believe there is a God!' I felt as if, Parsee-like, I must worship. The grey of the plains turned to purple, and the sky was all one rose-red flush, on which vermilion cloud-streaks rested; the ghastly peaks gleamed like rubies, the earth and heavens were new created.

"By seven we had finished breakfast, and passed into the ghastlier solitudes above, I riding as far as what was called rightly, or wrongly, 'The Lava Beds,' an expanse of large and small boulders, with snow in their crevices. It was very cold; some water which we crossed was frozen hard enough to bear the horses. 'Jim' had advised me against taking any wraps, and my thin Hawaiian riding-dress, only fit for tropics, was penetrated by the keen air. The rarified atmosphere soon began to oppress our breathing and I found the

Photo by Harold M. Dunning, Loveland, Colo.

THE OLD STAGE POST "NAMAQUA"

The home of Mariana Modena, as it looks more than half a century after. Three miles southwest of Loveland, Colorado

boots I wore were so large that I had no foothold. Fortunately before the real ascent began we found under a rock, a pair of overshoes, probably left by another exploration party. On arriving at the Notch, a literal gate of rock, we found ourselves absolutely on the knife-like ridge or backbone of Long's Peak, only a few feet wide, covered with colossal boulders and fragments, and on the other side shelving in one precipitous, snow-patched sweep of 3000 feet to a picturesque hollow, containing a lake of pure green water. Other lakes hidden among dense pine woods, were father off, while close above us rose the peak, which for about 500 feet, is a smooth, gaunt, inaccessible looking pile of granite. Passing through the notch we looked along the nearly inaccessible side of the Peak, composed of boulders and debris of all shapes and sizes, through which appeared broad, smooth ribs of reddish-colored granite, looking as if they upheld the towering rock-mass above. Serrated ridges, not much lower than that on which we stood, rose, one beyond the other, as far as pure atmosphere could carry the vision, broken into awful chasms deep with ice and snow, rising into pinnacles piercing the heavenly blue with their cold, barren grey, on, on forever, till the most distant range upbore unsullied snow alone. There were fair lakes mirroring the dark pine woods, canyons, dark and blue-black with unbroken expanses of pines, snow-slashed pinnacles, wintry heights frowning upon lovely

parks, watered and wooded, lying in the lap of summer; North Park floating off into the blue distance, Middle Park closed till another season, the sunny slopes of Estes Park and winding down among the mountains the snowy ridge of the divide, whose bright waters seek both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. There, far below, links of diamonds showed where the Grand river takes its rise to seek the mysterious Colorado, with its still unsolved enigma, and lose itself in the waters of the Pacific; and nearer the snow-born Thompson bursts forth from the ice to begin its journey to the Gulf of Mexico. Nature rioting in her grandest mood exclaimed with voices of grandeur, solitude, sublimity, beauty, and infinity; 'Lord what is man that Thou are mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?' Never-to-be forgotten glories, they were, burnt into my memory by six hours of terror. At the Notch the real business of the ascent began. Two thousand feet of solid rock towered above us, four thousand feet of broken rock shelved precipitously below; smooth, granite ribs, with barely foothold, stood out here and there; melted snow refrozen several times, presented a more serious obstacle; many of the rocks were loose, and tumbled down when touched.

"Snowy ranges one behind the other extended to the distant horizon folding in their wintry embrace the beauties of Middle Park. Pike's Peak, more than one hundred miles away, lifted that

vast but shapeless summit which is the landmark of southern Colorado. There were snow patches, snow slashes, snow abysses, snow forlorn and soiled looking, snow pure and dazzling, snow glistening above the purple robe of pine worn by all the mountains; while away to the east in limitless breadth, stretched the green grey of the endless plains. Giants everywhere reared their splintered heads. From thence, with a single sweep, the eye takes in a distance of 300 miles — that distance to the west, north, and south being made up of mountains, ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen thousand feet in height, dominated by Long's Peak, Gray's Peak, and Pike's Peak. On the plains we traced the rivers by their fringe of cottonwoods to the distant Platte, and between us and them lay glories of mountain canyon, and lake, sleeping in depths of blue and purple most ravishing to the eye.

"As we crept from the ledge round a horn of rock I beheld what made me perfectly sick and dizzy to look at — the terminal peak itself — a smooth, cracked face or wall of pink granite, as nearly perpendicular as anything could well be up which it was possible to climb. Scaling, not climbing, is the correct term for this last ascent. It took one hour to accomplish 500 feet, pausing for breath every minute or two. The only foothold was in narrow cracks or on minute projectures on the granite. To get a toe in these cracks, or here and there on a scarcely obvious pro-

jection, while crawling on hands and knees, all the while tortured with thirst and gasping and struggling for breath, this was the climb; but at last the peak was won. A grand, well defined mountain top it is, a nearly level acre of boulders, with precipitous sides all around, the one we came up being the only accessible one.

"From the summit was seen in unrivalled combination all the views which had rejoiced our eyes during the ascent. It was something at last to stand upon the storm-rent crown of this lonely sentinel of the ROCKY RANGE, on one of the mightiest of the vertebrae of the backbone of the North American continent, and to see the waters start for both oceans. Uplifted above love and hate and storms of passion, calm amidst the eternal silences, fanned by zephyrs and bathed in living blue, peace rested for that one bright day on the peak."

As Miss Bird laid her letter aside Sally sat speechless for some moments, so spellbound was she over the story of a woman's courage and her mastery over the giant peak of the Rockies.

"Miss Bird," she said presently, "if I had your courage I could stay here in this wonderful land, but lacking it, I am going to run away at my first opportunity.

"You spoke about the peak being 'above love

and hate and storms of passion.' Were I sure of that, I would start ascending it tonight."

"Don't you really think, Miss Lee," the novelist asked, "that there are things greater than a woman's love?"

"There might be, Miss Bird," Sally replied "but I have never found them."

CHAPTER XIV

Love is Lonely

"I tell you, Modena, I must know what has happened to Namaqua. It is not fair to me. I love her and she loves me. I know she would not voluntarily leave without bidding me good-by. I mean to sift this thing to the bottom and if anything has happened to Namaqua, I will hold you to strict account for it." Jack Sailsbury's eyes flashed angrily as he spoke.

"Your behavior is both commendable and unwarranted," Modena replied. "I have told you many times that no harm has come to Namaqua and that I have just sent her away for a while to rest.

"I appreciate your interest in her. You say you love her. That may be true. But to you she is just a beautiful young girl whom you desire to possess. Just a passing fancy. To me she is everything. I too love her, Jack. That is why I am determined to save her."

"Save her!" Jack fairly shouted. "Save her from what?"

"From you, Mr. Sailsbury, and please do not get excited. Excitement isn't always healthy for folks out here in the West. I want you to listen to me a moment.

"I haven't always been the rough man whom you see today. I was raised in Spain and educated in some of the finest schools in the world and I know something of the civilization from which you come. I'll grant that you imagine you are in love with Namaqua. I'll even go farther than that, Jack, I'll grant that you are in love with her. But love must be ready to sacrifice anything for its own sake. Are you willing to make that sacrifice?"

"My God, Modena!" Jack replied warmly, "have I not already sacrificed everything for her, my home, my career, relatives, and everything? I am never going back East again. I am going to stay here forever, just for the love of her."

"So that, Jack, is what you call sacrifice? Love must also be brave, and not ashamed of the thing it worships. You are brave enough to sacrifice a career but too cowardly to take Namaqua back among your people and claim her as your equal."

"That isn't the reason for my decision, Modena. You don't understand. I am doing it for

Namaqua's sake. My folks would never receive her, and I could not bear to wound her sensitive heart. It would be unfair to her to take her from these surroundings and transplant her in the cruel society of New York. It would be impossible."

"Then you shall never marry her with my consent."

"If that is final, Modena, I might as well tell you now, that I will marry her without it. You have been very kind to me, Modena, and I do not like to leave you in this manner, but I am going away today. I don't know where, but I cannot remain longer as your guest. I intend to marry Namaqua in spite of you."

"Jack, I have just one more appeal to make to you and it is this: I realize you are at present madly infatuated with Namaqua. She is not always going to be as pretty and attractive as she is today. The day is coming when the roses will fade from her cheeks, when her eyes will become duller than they are today, when the novelty of youthful love will fade from your own heart. Do you think, when that day comes, when she gets as old as her mother is now and perhaps looks as care-worn as her mother, do you think that you will repent of your bargain and long for the associations of your boyhood in the culture of your

Eastern home? Do you think you could love her as an ordinary squaw?"

"Modena, there is no use of preaching to me longer. I am going to marry Namaqua and if you will pardon me I will pack up my belongings and be on my way."

Jack hastily packed his things and as he mounted his horse to ride away, Modena caught the bridle rein and reaching up, grasped Jack's hand warmly.

"Good-by, Jack," he said. "I have taken a liking to you and we part friends, but remember the law of the West. I have forbidden you to see Namaqua again."

"Good-by, Modena," Jack said grimly. "I am going to marry her."

As he rode away, Modena turned to Lucas Brandt and said: "That's a plucky chap, but I think we have seen the last of him. He's headed right for the mountains now. He is going to Sally — and that's where he belongs."

Up at the Keyhole of the Devil's Backbone where Louis Papa had again pitched the tepee for his mother and Namaqua, the world was dark and dreary for the little girl who spent her carefree childhood in these same surroundings. The old song of the river winding through the valley

below for her had lost its charm. The moon that used to tell her of love and dreams, no longer beamed as brightly as in her childhood days.

Her heart and soul and her very life was given into the keeping of Jack Sailsbury and without him nothing else mattered. To her love was everything and Jack was love.

"I cannot stand it here much longer," she told "John," her foster mother. "I am going home tomorrow. I know Jack is almost frantic, wondering what has become of me. It is too cruel and I think father was terrible to doubt him even for a moment. How silly I was to grant his wish!"

Then the color slowly faded from her cheek. She turned white and would have fallen had she not been caught in the friendly arms of the kindly old Indian woman who had tenderly cared for her since her infancy.

Down in the valley Namaqua had seen a lone rider headed westward. "Jack," she murmured, "going to Sally. Oh, mother, why did God send this man down to torture me?"

"No mind that," "John" said soothingly as she led Namaqua into the tepee. "Louis go get him."

"No!" Namaqua fairly screamed. "I thank God for one thing — that I found him out before it was too late."

CHAPTER XV

Jack and Sally

Jack Sailsbury rode aimlessly toward the hills. He had no definite plans. His knapsack was well filled with food and with his artist's material fastened to his saddle he had set out with two ideas planted firmly in his mind. First, that he was going to marry Namaqua and second, that he must get away from Modena.

He cared little where his horse took him, so giving it free rein, taking no heed of the landscape, which was unusual for him, because his artist soul was always alive to the beauties of the mountains and ever searching for new treasures to add to his wonderful art collection.

But today he saw nothing and thought nothing but Namaqua, until he was interrupted from his reverie by a voice exclaiming:

"Well, Jack Sailsbury, whither art thou wandering?"

Sally, after many glorious hours spent at Estes Park and at the home of the Hutchinsons, hours also mingled with pain, in the long stretches of

the night, when alone with her thoughts, had run into the very man she sought most to avoid, as she traveled toward the stage depot, intent on embarking on her journey to California.

"Well, Sally, you're a sight for sore eyes," Jack laughingly remarked. The sight of Sally had immediately drawn him out of his dreamy and somewhat sullen mood. Sally was just that way and few men indeed could resist her most pleasing personality.

And then too, to a man in love, when that love is not running smoothly, there is always a deep satisfaction in knowing that another woman will understand when the male population of the world seems to have little care or sympathy for those who strike a snag in the otherwise peaceful river of supreme happiness.

"I don't know where I'm going, Sally," Jack said, "so in that case I will turn around and ride back a ways with you."

They chatted gaily as they rode along, Sally telling Jack of her experiences since last they met and of Miss Bird and Mountain Jim; of the thrilling account of the ascent of Long's Peak, that Miss Bird had written to her sister in England and had read to Sally. Suddenly their horses came to a stop.

"For heaven's sake, Jack, where are we?" Sally exclaimed.

They had come to a halt at the end of a steep canon, walled in on each side and in front of them by gigantic cliffs.

"I don't know, Sally, I never saw this place before, but isn't it wonderful? I would like to stop and paint it, but it is getting late and we had better turn back."

They turned their horses in the direction from whence they entered the canon and after traveling for some distance came to a fork with three canon exits.

"Sally," Jack said, "we're lost. I haven't the least idea which of these canons lead out to the trail we left."

"Oh, Jack, isn't it thrilling!" Sally exclaimed joyfully.

Jack admitted that it was.

"Guess I'll dismount and see if I can discover the tracks of the horses. It will be easy enough to determine which way we entered this enchanted spot," Jack said.

"Well, this is a good one, Sally! The grass is as wet as the river. Did you know it rained? I'm not wet. Are you?"

"Just another trick of the mountains, Jack. We

learn something from them every day. I remember Mountain Jim telling me how it would rain torrents in some parts of the mountains, while half a mile away the sun would shine."

The tracks were completely obliterated and not a trace of them could be found.

"Tell you what we'll do," Jack said laughingly. "I'll toss up a coin. If heads come up, we'll take the left hand canon; if tails come up we'll take the right, and if it stands on edge we'll go down the center."

Jack flipped the coin. It came heads up and they started down the left hand canon.

The sun had settled behind the cliffs and twilight was fast approaching as they rode into the center of the wildest region Jack had ever seen, to a spot where the river wound its way in beauty around the cliffs, and beside the banks of the stream stood an old, dilapidated and abandoned cabin.

"Sally," Jack said, "we had better camp here for the night. It is impossible for us to find a way out in the dark and there will be shelter, at least, from the chill night air for us here."

"Oh, Jack," Sally pleaded, "we must go on;

can't you understand, we can't stay here, just you and I?"

"Sally, wouldn't you trust me?" Jack said sadly.

"Yes, Jack, I would trust you with my life."

"Thank you, Sally. Here is where we camp for tonight. I'm as hungry as a bear and have lots of things in my saddle bag, fit for a king and almost fit for a queen, like you," Jack volunteered laughingly.

"I too, am prepared," Sally replied. "Mrs. Hutchinson filled my bags with goodies before I left there this afternoon. She said Truly Westerners never left home without plenty of food — in case they became lost."

"Well, she guessed right," Jack said as they dismounted.

Characteristic of any of the abandoned cabins of the old West, Jack and Sally found the place fully equipped with stove and cooking utensils. Pictures hung on the wall. A home-made bed made of split logs and fastened to the wall and generously supplied with bedding, occupied one corner of the cabin.

"I don't know who owns this cabin," Jack said,

"but they are surely very thoughtful and considerate. Look at that woodbox, piled high with kindling. I'll start the fire and then hustle down to the river and get some water."

"And I'll make the coffee, Jack, and fry the bacon. I learned to brew coffee from Namaqua and I'll show you what an apt scholar I am," Sally said gaily.

At the mention of Namaqua's name Jack's face clouded. In the ecstasy of Sally's companionship he had almost forgotten Namaqua. Sally noticed the change come over his face. She placed her hand lightly on his arm.

"Love is wonderful, but sometimes it hurts, doesn't it, Jack?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied, as he patted her hand gently, "love is wonderful. And," he added, as he grasped the water pail and started for the river, "it is also sometimes painful."

Sally brewed the coffee, but Jack insisted on frying the bacon, and between them they soon prepared a tempting meal. These were glorious moments for Sally, whose love for Jack had become the dominating spirit of her life, but her loyalty to Namaqua had caused her decision to leave the country.

Here was the paradise of which she dreamed night after night as she vainly courted sleep and tried to drive from her mind the vision of the man she loved.

A cottage in the hills, night and the stars, with the moonlight playing on the river, and she alone with Jack.

CHAPTER XVI

A Breed Rides Westward

"John" motioned for Louis to leave the tepee, then followed him outside.

"Better Namaqua be left alone for a while," she told Louis. "Maybe she cry then. That will be good for her."

"I'll ride over and get Dr. Hutchinson," Louis replied.

"No, Louis, she need 'brave' and preacher. She no need doctor," his mother assured him.

Louis made no reply but mounting his horse rode westward. He followed the trail over the higher range toward Estes Park. Through a giant bowl of the Rockies he rode, a spot of exquisite beauty, with the rays of the setting sun painting the golden acres within the bowl and tracing many colors on the granite mountains that formed the crest of the rim, whose slopes were thickly studded with cedar and aspen — the blondes and brunettes of the forests.

"Daylight and Darkness," Louis exclaimed, as he paused for a moment to gaze at the beauty of

the scene where cedar and aspen met. The cedar spread their fluffy branches of darkest green far out from the trunks of trees and then drooped them downward to the ground, while the aspen, with trunk as white as snow, towered thirty and forty feet in the air without a branch.

"Nice big country, this," Louis said to his horse as he patted her neck gently. "But not big enough for me and Jack unless he does right with Namaqua. One of us die, but I find out which when we get back.

"Huh! wonder where that water is coming from?" he mused aloud as he saw a little streamlet trickling down from the top of a mountain. "You stay here, Star-Face," he said, speaking to his horse. "I'm going up and see."

On the top of a granite mountain Louis discovered a lake, whose crystal waters, touched by the afterglow of a sinking sun, made a beautiful picture that thrilled the heart of this child of nature.

"Huh!" he said again. "I never saw this before. The mountains have something new to show you every day."

From this lake on the mountain crest, Louis could see the plains of Wyoming stretching away to the northland and down in the valley to the east

could be seen the cabins of Mariana Modena, the stage depot, and other dwellings of settlers. Pike's Peak, 130 miles away, thrust its ungainly bulk through the gathering twilight, while to the west the Continental Divide slumbered in peace beneath its cap of snow. From the lofty pinnacle of Long's Peak to the south to Hallett's glacier on the north, Louis viewed the wonders of this mysterious and moody range that split the waters of a continent in two. From the western slope of this ridge the waters of the mountain streams find their way through the solitude of the western range country to feed the glories of the Pacific. While down the eastern slope of the divide streamlets hurry toward the rising sun, and become lost in the dashing waves of the Atlantic.

"Guess I'll name this country, I seem to be the only one here," Louis mused aloud. "Let's see! Granite Lake! That's a good name for this place and over yonder is Cedar and Aspen parks. Guess no one has ever been here before. It's sure purty."

A shot rang out from the thickly studded cedar below. Louis dropped suddenly to the ground and began working his way down the mountain side, toward his horse, crawling like a worm.

He crept into the heavy foliage of the pine

grove near by and whistled to Star-Face, who followed. Louis patted Star-Face on the neck. "I guess we ran into bad Indians," he said. Star-Face seemed to understand and answered the caress by "nosing" his master playfully.

"Guess we better get out of this timber though, Star-Face, or they might surround us. Think we can make that tall rock over yonder across the clearing? Well, all right, 'Gid-ap'."

Horse and rider dashed quickly across the clearing to the shelter of a huge pyramid rock, towering thirty feet in the air, on top of which nature had carved almost a perfect bust of George Washington.

"Well, what do you suppose they're running away for, Star-Face?" Louis exclaimed as he peered around the rock and saw several horsemen crossing over the crest of Union Peaks and the Big Thompson canon below.

"Delaney's gang, sure as you're born. I guess we have invaded their territory and that means death if they catch us. Better we be going toward Estes Park, Star-Face. We must bring back that preacher and then hunt up Sailsbury. He has to do the right thing by Namaqua."

Dan Delaney was furious when his men rode

into camp and told him of the lone rider they had seen in the Cedar Park region. Furious because they had allowed the rider to escape and furious because anyone should have the temerity to invade the hunting grounds of his domain.

He immediately ordered all trails and mountain passes guarded and demanded that a thorough search of the region be made for poachers.

"If you find anyone, bring him in alive," he ordered his men, "but do not let him escape. Kill if necessary, though I would rather do the killing myself."

Louis rode onward toward Estes Park until twilight faded and the bulky outline of the mountains were hidden in the shades of nightfall. By the banks of the river, in the shelter of the surrounding hills, he camped for the night and early the following morning rode on to the home of the Rev. Elkanah J. Lamb, pioneer preacher of the Estes Park country.

Here the faithful breed told the preacher of the love of Namaqua for Jack Sailsbury.

"He can't fool her like that," he said to the preacher. "You must go back with me. I hunt up Jack and he must marry girl."

It took considerable argument on the part of

Louis to convince Rev. Lamb of the justness of his demands but the preacher finally consented to return to the Devil's Backbone with his persistent visitor and perform the marriage, provided both of the contracting parties were willing.

"Jack, he be willing when I get through with him," was the only comment Louis made on the preacher's reservation.

CHAPTER XVII

The Flames of Love

"Sally, come out here! Never mind washing those dishes. We'll clean them up in the morning! Besides, how can a person do such a commonplace thing as washing dishes, when the moon is so beautiful?"

Sally laughed gaily. "Just finished the task, Jack," she replied, as she stepped out into the glory of a Colorado night.

The moon hung motionless over a towering snow-capped peak. A mountain breeze was blowing freshly from the river; stars were twinkling in a cloudless sky as Jack and Sally made their way to the banks of the river beside the cabin; to a seat that the hand of the builder of the cabin must have hewn from a giant log.

"Whoever made this seat must have known we were coming, don't you think so?" Jack inquired. "It's built just for two."

"Haven't you any imagination, any vision, Jack, besides that which you paint upon your canvas?" Sally answered.

"Can't you picture this cabin and this wonderful trysting place built by some romantic couple who stole away from civilization just to be alone?"

"Yes, Sally, I can imagine such a possibility back in civilization where romance is queen, but out here in this wonderful and also — I almost said Godforsaken — country a person must fight for what he gets — and by the eternal, Sally, I'm going to fight."

And then Jack told to Sally his difficulties in the conquest of the heart of Namaqua, of his decision to leave the valley and his determination to find Namaqua and marry her in spite of the objections of Modena.

"Modéna has been your friend, Jack," Sally said after he had finished his story. "Do you think a person is justified in taking advantage of a person who has sheltered him, and repay him for his kindness by taking from him the one person on earth that he really loves? — and Modena does love Namaqua better than his own life."

"Yes, Sally," Jack replied, "I believe a person is justified in using any honorable means to win the girl he loves. There is nothing dishonorable about my love for Namaqua. I am not doing her

an injustice; nor am I doing Modena an injustice. He cannot expect a beautiful girl like her to remain single forever."

"Do you think then, Jack," Sally retorted, "that a girl has the same privilege? If I loved a man whom a very dear girl friend of mine also loved, do you think it would be honorable for me to fight for him? Do you think I would be treating her fairly to use any means within my power, in spite of that friendship, to take from her the man she loves?"

"Yes, Sally, love is the greatest thing in the world and every person is entitled to its fulfillment. You are justified in fighting for the man you love."

"Then, by the eternal, Jack," Sally said, quoting his own words, "I am going to fight.

"Jack, I love you.

"I ran away from you. I tried to forget, for Namaqua's sake. But I cannot. At night up there in Estes Park, when the family had retired, I used to sit by the window while the moonlight played upon the mountains and dream and dream about you. It's no use, Jack, I can't forget. You have taught me how to love — and how to fight, and I will not and cannot give you up!"

Men are creatures of emotions, whose love,

though ever so strong for an absent sweetheart, is swept away in the presence of beautiful womanhood — especially if his admiration for that woman is great — and Jack was no exception to the rule.

Before he knew it, he had folded Sally in his arms and was placing kisses passionately upon her lips.

For a long time neither spoke. Heaven came down to Sally and for the time being she forgot everything but the fact that she loved Jack and that she was nestling in his arms.

A coyote across the river, on the mountain side, sent forth a dismal call to its mate.

"Poor fellow has lost his sweetheart," Jack said, breaking the silence, "and he's calling for her.

"Perhaps some cruel hunter has laid her low and he will have to find another love," Jack continued, "but even that could not still the ache and yearning in his heart."

Sally struggled and freed herself from his arms.

"It's no use, Jack," she said, "this is but a Fools' Paradise. You love Namaqua and no one could ever turn your love for her."

"Yes, Sally, you are right. I love her. I don't

know what possessed me to take you in my arms and kiss you. Don't think me a cad, Sally, please don't. It was just that wild, irresistible impulse born in the hearts of men. I admire you greatly. To me you are one of the sweetest girls I ever met and I meant you no harm. Please forgive me, won't you, Sally?"

"Don't ask me to forgive you, Jack; I love you. No one should be compelled to ask forgiveness from a woman who loves him.

"I was just foolish, that's all, and my humiliation is my punishment for betraying Namaqua. It is I who ask forgiveness and tomorrow I must continue my journey to California. It is better that we part."

"Yes, Sally, it is better we part," Jack replied sadly.

The moon settled behind the rim of the mountain across the way as Jack escorted Sally back to the cabin.

"I believe you will find plenty of bedding in there on the bunk," he said as he bade her good night. Taking his blankets he made himself a comfortable bed in the shelter of the underbrush where the tuneful music of the river soon lulled him to sleep — and to roseate dreams of Namaqua.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Face on the Mountain

When Jack awoke the next morning the sun had already crept over the range and sparkled the dew in the heart of the canon. Jack hastily arose and going to the cabin, rapped gently on the door. There was no reply from within.

Several times he rapped, then slowly shoved open the door. He soon perceived that the bunk had not been occupied and Sally was gone.

He rushed down to where the horses had been tethered, by the banks of the river, then stopped at a picture that struck deeply in his artist soul.

Seated on a huge boulder in the center of the stream was Sally, her long, flowing tresses hanging loosely over gleaming white shoulders and her bared feet playing in the water.

Quietly he stole back to his saddle bag and procured his painting material and returning to the steep walled granite canon, beside the stream, he began to trace her picture on the sheer precipice of rock. For a long time he worked and Sally,

unmindful of his presence, was fighting out her girlhood dream.

Presently she looked up from her reverie and saw him. In humiliation she slid from the rock into the stream.

"For God's sake, Sally, get back on that rock and don't move," Jack implored. "Never in my life do I hope to get such a picture as this, Sally; it will be my masterpiece."

Sally soon regained her composure and climbing back on the rock smilingly replied: "If poor little me can be an inspiration to you, Jack, I will feel that life is worth while after all."

As Jack continued to trace her picture on the rock he asked: "Sally, where were you last night? Your bed was not occupied."

Sally replied by taking Jack to task for his indifference. "I believe after all, you are just like other men in some respects, but in others you are just far more wonderful. In honor, Jack, you are a king, but in indifference to your sweetheart you measure up well with the balance of the male population. Last night you professed to be pining away because of your desire to find Namaqua, and I believe you are sincere. Yet, you had hardly nestled down in your bed when your deep breathing told me you were fast asleep.

"I was frightened alone in the cabin. I didn't stay in there a minute after you bade me good night. I took my saddle blanket and spent the night not a dozen feet from you there in the underbrush. But I didn't sleep much, Jack. I was too humiliated."

"Sally, please don't punish me like that. I took advantage for a moment last night of your great love — and there is no love as great as that of a woman. I showed my weakness and the baseness of my nature and although you have forgiven me, I shall always feel that I once broke faith with a wonderful woman, whose shoes I am not fit to lace."

"Your honor, Jack," she replied, "was greater than your weakness. You conquered and to me you are the soul of honor. Let us not speak of the incident again.

"Tell me, Jack," she said, "if this is to be your masterpiece, why paint it on the mountainside in this lonely spot where the world will never see it?"

"It is a tribute to noble womanhood, Sally, and too sacred for the prying eye of the public that does not always appreciate or understand, and beside, it has entered my heart so deeply that I could at any time in after years retrace it on canvas without the presence of the original. Sally, I

wish I could make you understand just how I feel toward you, but I know it's no use trying. You wouldn't believe me."

"Now, Jack, don't get sentimental," Sally smilingly demanded. "We are just friends, you know, and I understand perfectly."

"There, Sally, is the masterpiece," Jack said, as he put the finishing touch on the picture and painted underneath it:

"To pure womanhood, the most noble of God's creatures."

Jack saddled the horses and the two started out of the canon, retracing their steps over the trail they entered the previous evening.

Coming to the intersection of the canon, they traveled down another trail and soon found the main trail leading from the Hutchinson cabin to Namaqua stage post.

They had traveled but a short distance toward the post when they heard the beating of horses' hoofs behind them and heard a man shouting fiercely commands to halt.

Reining their horses they awaited the arrival of their pursuer.

Louis Papa rode up beside them.

"Where are you two going?" he demanded.

Photo by Harold M. Dunning, Loveland, Colo.

THE OLD HOME OF MARIANA MODENA

three miles southwest of Loveland, Colorado. The man in a light suit is Lucas Brandt and the other is Louis Papa. Taken in July, 1925, more than fifty years after the coming of the settlers

"Where is Namaqua, Louis?" Jack pleaded. "For God's sake tell me before I kill you."

"You two not running away? You really looking for Namaqua?" Louis asked in a surprised manner. "I thought you trying to steal away."

"If you know where she is, Louis, tell me before I go mad."

"Sure I tell you. She up in tepee near Keyhole. I bring preacher from Estes Park. You must marry Namaqua."

At this juncture Rev. Lamb, who had been trailing in the rear, rode up.

"Here is our man," Louis told him. "We go right away to the tepee."

Jack was overjoyed and in that joy, for a moment, forgot the presence of Sally as he started to ride madly toward the Keyhole.

Suddenly he reined his horse and turning in his saddle saw Sally riding slowly down the trail toward the stage post.

He turned his horse and dashed down the trail in pursuit. Louis, who mistook his action for an effort to run away, raised his rifle, but Rev. Lamb understood and prevented him from carrying out his evident purpose of preventing flight by shooting the horse.

"Sally," Jack pleaded, when he rode up beside her, "please forgive me for the hundredth time. I was so overcome with joy at finding Namaqua that I did not realize what I was doing.

"You told me this morning that you were a friend of mine. If you mean it, Sally, you will come with me to the Keyhole and be bridesmaid. The ceremony is going to be performed without a moment's delay."

Sally made no comment but reined her horse around and the quartette rode silently to the tepee at the Keyhole of the Devil's Backbone.

CHAPTER XIX

Delaney Makes A Discovery

Dan Delaney, riding at the head of a small detachment of his men, was somewhat aimlessly wandering through the mountain fastness. He was out on no particular mission, except an attempt to throw from his soul the terrible vision of his younger days.

Despite his hard and cruel nature that had become callcused by the tragedy of a broken love and the thoughts of the murder of his rival, there were moments when he sought to forget his hatred and shut out the boyhood scenes that had caused him to be an outcast and the terror of the West.

During these periods of remorse, Delaney would ride through the most lonely canons of the mountain range, with a few of his picked men following him.

His men knew well their orders and asked no questions. These rides were always made in silence, at the command of the leader. No word was uttered during the tedious journey, for the

rough, uncouth bandits had learned to fear Delaney more when this mood took possession of him than when he outwardly exhibited his brutal leadership.

Suddenly Delaney halted. His men likewise drew rein.

Across the canon on the huge precipice loomed the painted picture of Sally Lee, the beautiful profile, almost an exact likeness of her mother — the woman for whom Delaney had thrown away his manhood.

The leader removed his slouched hat and dismounting from his horse walked across the canon to the base of the cliff.

He knelt down almost reverently before the picture.

"It is an act of God," he murmured. "The Supreme Being, whom I have denied, and outraged, has followed me here to taunt me."

Amazed at the peculiar acts of their leader the men held whispered conversations. The depraved minds of his white followers and the simple superstitions of the Indian companions were gripped with fear. They could face bullets of an enemy and cruelly massacre defenseless women and children, but a human likeness appearing upon a

rock in the little-frequented spot drove terror into their hearts.

"No one but God could have put that picture there," Delaney continued. "No one here knows of my past life. No one here knows that I killed the husband of the woman I loved, and no one but God could have traced such a wonderful likeness of her."

He sprang to his feet, his eyes again gleaming with passion.

"Go," he shouted to one of his men, "ride like the devil to the camp and bring me some powder.

"I'll show you how Delaney treats white women who invade his territory, even though they are but painted on a rock."

During the absence of the messenger Delaney again preached his old sermon to his men:

"There is no God. There is no love. Women are but slaves to do with as you will. Beautiful and with the heart of a devil they attempt to dominate our lives. There is nothing true about them. Whining, cringing, fawning, they play upon the passions of man, until they get him within their clutches — and crush him."

The men, as usual, remained silent during Delaney's talk and when the messenger returned

with the powder, Delaney tamped the rock and inserting the powder, lit the fuse, then rode hastily with his men up the canon to watch the havoc of the blast.

A terrific explosion echoed through the hills. Delaney, with a look of bitterness on his face, smiled as he saw the parcels of rock hurled high in the air.

His smile, however, was of short duration. Explosions sometimes deliver freak results. The picture was completely destroyed by the blast, but high up in the mountain, the force of the explosion carved the likeness of a face, a terrible outline of a witch — the countenance of a devil.

Delaney could no longer hold his men. They fled in terror from the scene. He sat gazing at the rock-hewn image for some time, then reining his horse, rode after his fleeing men.

CHAPTER XX

The White "Indian"

Left alone with Namaqua, after Louis departed for Estes Park, "John" vainly tried to comfort her, but in spite of her efforts she saw the color fading from the girl's face and the dark circles appearing underneath already sunken eyes, told a tale of intense suffering.

"John" was at a loss to know what to do. In her primitive manner she loved the little white girl devotedly and as a last resort, in an attempt to make her understand that life was really worth living, she decided to tell Namaqua the story of her birth.

"Why do you cry so for white man?" she asked Namaqua.

"Because I'm foolish, I guess, mother," Namaqua replied..

"There is a queer little corner of my heart that is filled with hopeless longing, for the great wide world stretched somewhere beyond yonder range of mountains and over across the plains beyond the dip of the skyline.

"I guess it would have been better had Modena

never told me of that great world; better if he never taught me of things beyond my power to reach; better if I had never seen Jack Sailsbury and Sally Lee. Perhaps then I would have been contented with this, my native land. And yet, mother, even before I saw Jack and Sally there used to come to me visions of something big, that I could not understand."

"You no like this country, our people, Namaqua?" "John" queried.

"Oh, yes, I love this wonderful scope of the mountain and plain, but somehow or another there are things that it does not hold for which my heart longs. I love our people, of course I do. You're such a dear, kind mother to me. But you know I could never content myself as the wife of an Indian. I don't know why, but I just couldn't, mother, that's all. I couldn't."

"You dream too much, Namaqua. White man put foolishness in your head. Talks to you of love. Huh! love! He marry you! You be just squaw, to do white man's work, that's all."

"Yes, mother, you spoke the truth. Just squaw, that's all, and that's just why Jack left me for Sally. He too had his dreams and visions of a future.

"He loved me all right, mother, after a fashion, but his love for the white race and the things for which it stands with all its glorious traditions of the past of which I have read, was stronger than his love for any woman. It is always stronger. It is a part of one's being."

"When Indian brave love, he no run away. White man he lie to you or else he heap 'fraid," "John" insisted.

"You are right, mother, he was afraid. Afraid he could not bear a life of exile with me after youth began to fade from my cheeks; afraid he could not forget all the wonderful associations of his youth; afraid the longing to return would get the better of his heart and afraid to take me back with him — me just a squaw — to be ridiculed and laughed at by his friends and to humiliate his wealthy and aristocratic relatives!"

"Well, he no do right to say he love you if he no mean it," "John" declared, refusing to give an inch in her attempt to lay the blame on the shoulders of Jack toward whom she felt a deep and bitter resentment.

"Oh, I wouldn't judge him too severely, mother," Namaqua defended. "He is young, and youth is easily attracted. I do not blame Sally

either. She is pure gold. She loved Jack passionately, but in her loyalty to me she never once attempted to use her advantages of race to take him from me.

"She won and won in a fair fight as far as she was concerned. But I didn't have a fair break, mother. Jack loved me, I know, but he just couldn't bring himself about to marry a squaw. If I had been a white girl I would have won, but I am an Indian and all I want now is to die. Perhaps the color line isn't drawn in heaven."

Namaqua, exhausted by her talk, during which time her nerves were strained to the breaking point, gave way to bitter weeping and "John" was gravely worried.

"Little crying good, but too much heap bad," she said to herself. Then, mustering all her courage, she prepared for the supreme moment.

"Namaqua," she said, "you really think if you white girl, Jack marry you?"

"Yes, mother, I do," Namaqua said between sobs. "But let us not talk of it any more. I just want to die, that's all."

"Listen, Namaqua, please, while I tell you story:

"One day many years ago I live at this same

spot with Joe Papa. Immigrant train came along the valley one day. We watch Delaney and his men sneak up on train and kill all people and carry their bodies away with them to be burned in hills. We sneak down to train after they left. Louis was a little papoose then. We find another little papoose, in the broken wagons. She was little white girl papoose, Delaney and his warriors didn't see and left behind them. We bring little papoose to tepee and take care of her and love her very much.

"You're that papoose, Namaqua, you no Indian. You white girl. Go find Jack and tell him. Then he marry you."

Namaqua sprang to her feet.

"Great God, mother! do you mean to tell me that I am really a white girl? That I am not an Indian? That you are not my mother, and that Delaney murdered my parents?"

"Yes, Namaqua, that true, me no lie to you about it."

"Oh, mother, why didn't you tell me before it was too late? Why did you allow me to lose the only man on earth that I will ever love, before telling me?"

"It no too late, Namaqua," insisted "John,"

"that's why me tell you now. Louis he find Jack and then you tell him you white. Everything be all right then."

"Mother, you just can't understand. Can't you see that I cannot barter myself at auction? Can't you see that I cannot sell him my blood and my race in return for his love?"

"John," the faithful old squaw that had mothered Namaqua all her life, burst into tears — the first time Namaqua had ever seen her cry, and pity and remorse struck the heart of the young girl.

"Forgive me, mother," she said, "I didn't mean to scold you. I was just trying to explain to you.

"Perhaps, after all, it is better Jack thought me to be an Indian, it was really a good test of genuine love and I want you to promise me, mother, that you will tell this story to no one, until I release you from the promise, or until I die.

"Run along, now, mother, and get the fish you promised to catch for me. I will prepare the balance of the meal. 'Namaqua the white girl'," she said smilingly, "has a score or two to settle before she dies."

CHAPTER XXI

Jack Hurries to Namaqua

Love triumphed over all other desires for Jack, who, unable to restrain himself to the steady gait of his companions, rode rapidly in advance.

His heart rejoiced in the thought that he would soon be with Namaqua and he thanked the sullen love and faithfulness of Louis Papa, which prompted him to ride to Estes Park, for a preacher, in his determination to make "Jack do the right thing by Namaqua."

Jack laughed, as he rode along, at the turn that fate had taken. "If Louis only knew how much I loved her," he mused, "he would have been spared all the anxiety. But his disbelief has played well for me and Namaqua will soon be mine forever."

"The old world is full of misunderstandings, anyway, aye Chick?" he said, speaking to his spirited horse as he urged it onward to greater speed.

Sally, Rev. Lamb, and Louis were left far below in the valley as Jack ascended the final slope to the Keyhole. His heart was beating wildly as

he dismounted and rushing to the door of the tepee, threw open the canvas flap.

Namaqua was gone. The camp was deserted.

When his companions reached the tepee they found Jack seated within. His determined jaw was set and in his eyes was a fierce light that Sally had never before seen.

When Louis entered the tepee, Jack sprang at him like a tiger.

"You dirty, lying Redskin," he shouted, "I'll tear you to pieces with my hands."

Sally quickly sprang between the two men.

"Why, Jack," she screamed, "what in the world is the matter with you?"

"I might have known better than to trust an Indian," Jack answered.

"This fellow has lied to me. I don't know what his game is but he'll never get a chance to prove false again. They have hidden Namaqua some place and I am going to find her, but first I am going to fix this Indian so that he will never tell another lie or betray another person. Indians are all alike. I should have known better."

"Jack, for heaven's sake, do you know what you are saying?" Sally asked. "Namaqua is an Indian, and Louis is her brother."

Jack turned away in silence. Sally had touched a tender chord in his heart.

"Never mind," Louis cut in, "Jack is all right. I believe in him now. We shall soon find Namaqua."

Down at the stage post things were in an uproar, with Modena frantically giving orders to his men to mount their horses and scour the country for Namaqua.

"John," foster mother of Namaqua, had hurried to the post when she discovered the absence of Namaqua from the tepee and had given the alarm.

When Jack and his companions rode down toward the valley on their way to the post to learn if Namaqua had gone there, they saw riders headed in different directions to give the alarm to the settlers and coming up the trail toward them rode Lucas Brandt. He told them of the return to the post of "John" and how she could not account for the disappearance of Namaqua who she said had left the tepee while her foster mother had gone to the river in quest of fish.

"John" told Modena, Brandt said, of the despondency of Namaqua and told of her seeing Jack riding westward and believed that he had deserted her for Sally.

"That's why I went to Estes Park after the preacher," Louis told Jack. "I too thought you were running away with Sally and I meant to force you to marry Namaqua."

Sally burst into tears. "Oh, why," she moaned, "did I ever come to this terrible place. I have lost everything but my self respect since coming here and now perhaps that too is gone. Perhaps I have murdered Namaqua. Oh, Jack, I fear she has killed herself."

Jack rode up beside her and placing an arm gently around her shoulders, said:

"Sally, you are the squarest little girl I ever met. No matter what has happened, remember I will always know it wasn't your fault.

"We must ride on to the post. We will leave you there and I will search for Namaqua until I find her."

Arriving at the post, Jack confronted Modena.

"Modena," he said, "I told you when I left here that if anything happened to Namaqua, you would have to pay and I mean to keep my word."

"Yes, you dirty white trash, we'll settle," Modena hotly replied. "But although you are a cur, I am going to give you a white man's chance. Draw, you scoundrel!"

Quick as a flash Louis Papa sprang between them.

"You two are all crazy," he said. "I, too, thought him yellow dog," he told Modena, "but I found different."

Louis then explained to Modena all that had transpired since he left and Sally cut in with the story of her accidental meeting with Jack in the mountains, of their night at the cabin, and of Jack's faithfulness and love for Namaqua.

Modena grasped Jack warmly by the hand. "I have been a blind old fool," he said, "forgive me, I did not understand. Now we must join all our efforts in an attempt to find Namaqua."

Jack shook Modena's hand warmly and mounting his horse rode directly to the "Spring of Truth." He feared that Namaqua had taken her life and knowing her temperament, reasoned that she would perhaps come back to the spring or to the cave on top of the butte, where they pledged their undying love. He was intensely relieved when arriving at this spot to find no trace of Namaqua, for he fully expected to find her body there. New hope sprang in his heart. That Namaqua was alive he was now certain.

All through the night searchers roamed the

hills and valley and at dawn they gathered at the stage post to report. No trace of the missing girl had been found.

After breakfast they again rode forth to their task, but hope of finding her alive had died within the hearts of all save Jack Sailsbury.

CHAPTER XXII

Wits Matched Against Wits

"Better you go out from here quick. He kill you sure if you don't."

A swarthy squaw was speaking to a slender slip of a girl.

"I tell you I came to see Delaney and I am going to see him," the girl replied haughtily.

"I tell you he kill you," the squaw insisted.

Dan Delaney strode from his hut, where a number of squaws were wildly waving their arms and jibbering in their native tongue. He walked directly to the center of the group and approaching the one who, in broken English was giving advice to the girl, brutally knocked her to the ground with his clenched fist.

Turning to the girl, he demanded: "May I ask who you are and why you have come here?"

"I am Namaqua," she replied, "daughter of Mariana Modena. I came here for some information that only you are able to give me."

"Did you not know," he inquired sternly, "that white women are not permitted to come here?

Did you not know that it would mean death to you to come?"

"But I am not a white woman, Mr. Delaney, my mother is a squaw," Namaqua answered.

"You lie, you little hussy," Delaney shouted at her. "Old Joe Papa once told me about finding you in that immigrant train years ago. You are the only white woman who ever escaped with her life out in this country that I have had anything to do with and now that a kind providence has sent you to me, I am going to make my record stand without exception."

He grasped her arm and fairly dragged her to his hut, shoved her inside and locked the door.

Almost breathlessly she listened to him as he strode away, giving curt orders to his men and shouting curses at the squaws, demanding that they prepare a meal for the girl.

Through the barred window of the hut, Namaqua watched the stars twinkling in the heavens. The moon, a molten ball of glory, was playing on the crest of a mountain towering near by. The river was murmuring songs of peace and Namaqua, in spite of her present predicament, a prisoner in the hands of one of the most brutal characters of the West, was absolutely fearless. To

her death would be a relief from the present tortures of losing the man she loved.

She had but one desire now in life and that was to find out, if possible, the identity of her parents. Delaney, she believed, was the only living person who could furnish that clue, and that is why she came to him.

There was a remote possibility, she believed, that among the loot taken from the train where her parents were killed, Delaney might have kept some token that would lead to her identity, and she risked her life on that one chance — for she knew well the reputation of the desperado.

Slumber had come to the camp of the outlaws. The only sound coming to the ears of Namaqua in her prison, besides the rushing of the waters and rustling of the mountain pines was the steady tread of the sentries who guarded the camp by night. The stillness was almost terrifying.

Then Namaqua heard footsteps on the threshold. A key was inserted in the lock and Dan Delaney entered, locked the door behind him, lit the lamp and placed the doorkey in his pocket. A contemptuous curl played about his lips.

"I have decided not to kill you just yet," he said. "You lied to me this afternoon. Just like

all white women lie. You told me you were a squaw. I am going to take you at your word. You are going to be my squaw.

"You are far more beautiful than the ordinary squaw," he sneered, "and I have decided that I want to possess you — own you, body and soul."

Grasping her, he tore her blouse from her shoulders while she fought like a tiger. Brutally he embraced her and with the fierceness of a beast he kissed her lips repeatedly.

Mustering her strength in a supreme effort she broke away from him and dashing around the opposite side of the table, grasped a hunting knife from a scabbard hanging on the wall.

Delaney drew his gun and smiled grimly.

"If you don't put that knife down, I shall kill you," he said.

"That will be the kindest thing you ever did in all your brutal career, Mr. Delaney," she replied calmly. "I don't intend to fight you with this knife. I only have it for self protection. If you advance one step toward me I shall plunge the knife into my heart. Now you can suit yourself. Either shoot me or I shall take my own life. I prefer that you shoot me.

"But before you do," she continued, "I have one

request to ask of you. In spite of your brutality you must have some spark of fair play left in your heart some place. When you do kill me, please send a messenger to the stage post and tell them I am dead so that Jack Sailsbury can marry Sally Lee and be happy to know I am out of the way. He loves her."

The face of the desperado relaxed and a new expression came into being at the mention of Sally Lee. He coolly handed the revolver across the table to Namaqua.

"Take this," he said, "for your own protection. I want to talk to you.

"Tell me, Namaqua," he asked, almost in a pleading voice, "who is this Sally Lee and where did she come from? Who is Jack Sailsbury? Tell me all about them."

Long into the night Namaqua sat in the cabin with this desperado and told the story of the coming of Jack and Sally to the valley and their life there.

As she related the story she saw Delaney's face soften and sympathy creep into his eyes and she realized that sometime, some place, there had been a spark of real manhood in his soul.

When a woman is deeply in love and has lost

the person she loves better than life, she longs for the companionship of some one, with whom she may confide and before Namaqua realized it, she was telling her love story, with all its complications, to Dan Delaney, forgetting for the time being that this desperado was the murderer of her parents.

CHAPTER XXIII

A Man Passes Over the Trail

"No word from Jack yet?" Modena asked Lucas Brandt as he rode up to the stage post and dismounted.

"Haven't heard or seen a thing of him," Brandt replied. "This thing is beginning to get on my nerves. First Namaqua disappears, and now Jack has vanished as though the earth had opened and swallowed him."

"Where did you see him last, Brandt?" Modena inquired.

"He was riding toward the Devil's Backbone. I think he was headed for the Keyhole, perhaps with the idea that Namaqua had returned there."

"Jack is quite capable of taking care of himself," Modena added, "but the fact that he had no food with him worries me. A man cannot live long, going the pace Jack is, without sleep, if he is also denied food."

"That's true," Brandt agreed, "but here is another thing I have been thinking about. A man may be ever so capable of taking care of himself

under ordinary conditions, but if a person is waylayed in the mountains and outnumbered ten to one, he has little chance."

"Delaney!" Modena exclaimed.

"That's it exactly," Brandt said. "I have been thinking that perhaps both Namaqua and Jack have become his victims. Have you ever stopped to think, Modena, that no trace of Namaqua's horse has been found? That's what makes me suspicious of Delaney. If she met with an accident, the horse would come home. I am sure she either deliberately rode out of the country or that Delaney has captured her — and if he has — well, you know, Namaqua has all the appearance of a white girl — and you know to Delaney that would mean murder."

"Yes," Modena agreed, "he would kill her. Jack's horse has not returned either. I believe you have the right idea. Suppose you and I ride to Delaney's camp and find out?"

"That's what I intended to do," Brandt said. "You better stay here. You might be needed."

"I have never yet asked a man to go a place I wouldn't go," Modena replied, "and I'm going with you."

"Hello! what's this coming?" cut in Louis

Papa, as Jack's horse, riderless and covered with sweat, came galloping up to the post.

"That puts a different light on the question, Brandt," Modena said. "Let us call out all the men and make a thorough search of the mountains. I fear Jack has been injured. As a last resort we will call on Delaney. The best we can get from a call on the bandit is the knowledge that Jack is dead — Delaney takes no prisoners. Let us turn all our efforts toward finding Jack, on the chance that he has been somehow hurt and is still alive."

Up the dry bed of a creek, where water once coursed down the wildest section of the mountain range, a man stumbled desperately along. His throat was parched and his lips were swollen from thirst and heat. His brain was racked with fever as he staggered on while he incoherently jibbered and mumbled to himself of Namaqua.

When Jack Sailsbury's favored horse had become tired from a day and night's hard riding, Jack rode back to the stage post and secured a new horse. That was three days before. He rode directly to the mountains and leaving the beaten trails, boldly set out in the wilderness in the hope of finding a trace of his sweetheart. The horse

stumbled going down a steep mountain side, throwing his rider. Jack was stunned by the fall and when he regained consciousness the horse was gone and many hours later it galloped back to the stage post.

Food the wanderer could get along without for days and still carry on, but it was the lack of water that seared his brain and sapped away his life.

Had he been a seasoned veteran of the West he would have dug with his hands into the bed of the old creek and found water, for it may be found in abundance a few feet below the surface of these dry beds, but while Jack had been here for some time he was still a "tenderfoot" and when no water was to be seen, there was none to be had as far as his knowledge went.

Suddenly he turned from the creek bed and began to creep slowly up an adjacent mountain. His strength had almost deserted him, but even in his delirium he knew that he must carry on or perish.

Reaching the crest of the mountain, he beheld the trail winding below him and mustering his last ounce of energy he began to descend the slope to the trail.

It is much more easy for an exhausted person

to climb a mountain than to descend. His knees finally gave way under him and he rolled down the steep incline to the trail.

Several hours later a band of Delaney's scouts rode along the trail toward the camp.

One of the men dismounted to examine the body of a man lying face downward, directly across the trail. He turned the body over with his foot.

"Never saw him before," he said, "but he's as dead as he'll ever be. Let's go on."

"You know the orders of the chief?" the leader of the scouts said. "He must be cremated!"

Jack Sailsbury was thrown across a saddle, strapped to the horse, and taken to the camp of Delaney for cremation.

CHAPTER XXIV

Delaney's Crime Ledger

For four days Namaqua had been a prisoner in the camp of Delaney. He had made no further effort to bother her, but came often to her hut to visit and at all times exhibited a courtesy which his followers never before knew he possessed.

He gave strict orders, under penalty of death, that none of the men should attempt to enter the hut occupied by Namaqua.

The girl was unafraid, yet puzzled at his actions in keeping her a prisoner. What his motive was, she was unable to determine.

On the afternoon of the fourth day he came to her hut and unlocked the door.

"Namaqua," he said, "I am going to give you the liberty of the camp, providing you promise me you will not attempt to run away. No harm will come to you here. But I cannot let you go just yet. I promise you, no one will act in any manner toward you that could possibly offend a lady.

"Besides, you know no place you care to go. Your lover has proven false and you would not

want to go back to the stage post now. Promise me, won't you? It really hurts me to keep you locked up like a felon, but I really cannot let you go — just yet."

"I'll tell you what I'll do with you, Delaney," Namaqua replied, "I really haven't told you yet why I came here. You are the murderer of my parents and I just learned it from Modena's squaw the day I left our camp at the Keyhole and I also learned for the first time that day that I am a white girl. I came here to see if, in the loot you and your robber band took from that train, you might possibly have some token that would establish my identity. If you will promise to help me establish my identity, I will promise not to run away."

"It's a bargain, Namaqua," Delaney replied; "but first please understand that I did not kill your parents. I was not with the band that attacked the train that day."

"Please do not try to make apology for your life of crime," Namaqua replied hotly. "Whether or not you were with the crew that day, you are the murderer of my parents, because you are the leader of this band."

"I guess you are right, girl," Delaney an-

swered. "I am a murderer and I have had many moments of terrible regret, but never such regrets as I have felt since you came here."

"It is never too late for a person to repent of his past life," Namaqua assured him.

"Yes, Namaqua, for me it is too late. What chance would I have to go back to civilization again? They'd hang me like a dog if I went back to the settlements again. But what's the use of talking about this any more? Let us go to my chest in yonder hut, perhaps I can find some trace of your paren'age."

Namaqua eagerly followed him. Taking a key from his pocket he unlocked a crudely constructed chest and took from it a book — a ledger with a record of his crimes.

Namaqua, as she curiously watched him scan the pages, felt that the man must indeed be insane and that none but the most perverted mind would index and carefully ledger an account of his vile deeds.

Carefully he turned back the pages of the book.

"Here it is," he said, "No. 36. Whatever trinkets worth while taken from that train will be found in the parcel in the chest bearing this number."

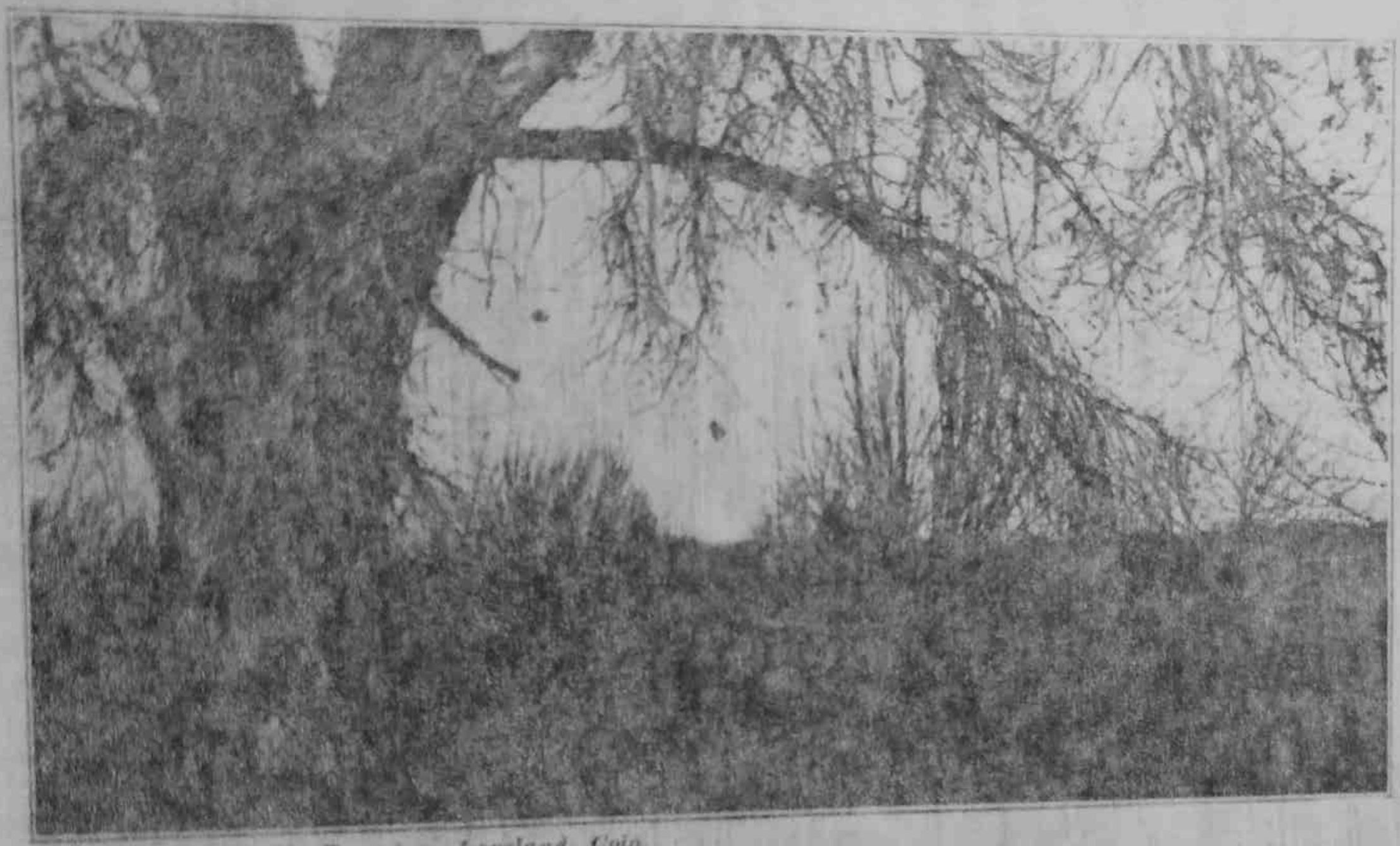


Photo by Harold M. Dunning, Loveland, Colo.

GRAVE OF MARIANA MODENA

who died forty years after the opening of this story; located three and a half miles southwest of Loveland, Colorado

He dug down to the bottom of a huge pile of souveniers of his life of crime and extracted the package.

Namaqua's heart beat wildly with excitement as he opened the parcel.

"Here is a photograph," he said, and then added slowly, as he carefully scrutinized Namaqua; "There is no question about it being your mother. You are the perfect image of her."

Namaqua grasped the picture eagerly and looked long and steadily at the features of a beautiful woman. She realized that there could be no mistake, Delaney had spoken the truth, she was the very image of her mother and that picture was unmistakably that of her mother.

But Namaqua was not alone attracted by the picture of her mother; her eyes were resting on one beside it — the picture of a fine-looking man, dressed in the uniform of a soldier.

She was puzzled and startled as she gazed intently at that face which bore a striking resemblance to someone she knew.

She turned the photo over and on the reverse side was written in ink: "Col. and Mrs. John J. Sailsbury, New York City, N. Y."

The picture slid from her grasp to the floor and

she made no effort to recover it as she sat dazed and gazing into space.

"What's the matter, Namaqua?" Delaney asked.

"Here you are, chief," a man from outside of the hut shouted. "Here's a dead man we found on the trail. What shall we do with him?"

Namaqua rushed out as the men lifted the body from the horse and cast it roughly on the ground.

Namaqua screamed and threw herself upon the body, kissing the upturned face passionately and weeping bitterly.

With a curse Delaney ordered his men away and gently taking Namaqua in his arms lifted her from the body of her lover. He bent down and placing his ear over Jack's heart he turned to Namaqua and said, "He is alive; I think we can save him."

CHAPTER XXV

Captain Wayne Bailey

Men who had searched faithfully night and day for Namaqua and Jack gathered for a final conference at the stage post. They had covered a wide area and not the slightest trace of the missing pair had been found.

Settlers from the valley had gathered to a man to aid in the search.

"The time has come," Modena said, "when we must move to rid this section of Delaney and his band. His fortress in the mountains he claims to be impregnable and I want you to understand fully that every man who volunteers to do what I am going to ask of you, places his life in the hands of Delaney. You all remember well the advantage of a fortress. Delaney, no doubt, remembers it too. With a force of fifty to one against us we beat him and slaughtered his men. Now I am going to ask for volunteers to go up against the same game Delaney was against. I am going to ask you to go with me and attack his stronghold. It is the only chance we have to rid the country of this menace.

"Many of you have families depending upon you for support. I am not asking you to take this step without considering well what you are doing. Nor would it be a sign of cowardice for anyone to refuse to go, for after all one's family should come first in the hearts of every one. But those who are willing to take the chance will please fall in line on the opposite side of the road."

Every man silently took his place in line. Modena smiled grimly.

"It seems to be unanimous," he said. "Now we must lay well our plans for attack. We must go well prepared."

"Two horsemen riding this way over the trail," young Milo Osborn announced as he rode up to the store for a new supply of food for the family larder. "I saw them about two miles back as I cut across the valley. They should be here soon. They were riding fast."

Presently the two men hove in sight.

"One of them is Louis," Modena said. "I never missed the rascal. I wonder where he has been this time? You never can tell just what the fellow will do next. He's a pretty good chap, though, at that."

The two men rode up and dismounted.

"This is Captain Wayne Bailey, of Camp Collins," Louis announced.

"Where the devil did you find him?" Modena demanded.

"Well, you see, I was thinking," Louis said, with an air of apology, "that something should be done about Delaney, and I didn't think we had enough men here to do the thing I was thinking about, so I rode over to the fort and told the captain about it."

"I don't know why I didn't think of that myself," Modena said with a laugh. "Guess I must have thought that this job belonged to us. I never did think much of soldiers anyway. They're all right in a pinch, but this valley belongs to us. Why should we ask the soldiers to risk their lives defending our property?"

Captain Bailey laughed. He saw plainly that Modena regarded his presence as an indication that the old western pioneers were not able to take care of themselves without calling government troops.

"I just came over to investigate," he said with a smile. "Of course if you do not need me, I will return to camp. There is no harm in my coming, is there?"

"No harm at all," Modena assured him, "but I think we can handle the situation ourselves."

Sally, who had been standing in the doorway of the store listening to the conversation, rushed out.

"Oh, please, Modena, let him bring the soldiers," she pleaded. "We must find Jack — and," she added as an afterthought, "Namaqua."

"I'll have no interference by the soldiers," Modena said gruffly. "That's final."

Captain Bailey looked squarely into the eyes of Sally and again he smiled, showing a beautiful set of teeth, and Sally thought at that moment he was the handsomest man she had ever seen — and his uniform did become him wonderfully.

"Never fear, little girl," he said to Sally, "I am commander of the troop. The soldiers shall come."

He hastily scribbled an order on a piece of paper and handed it to Louis.

"Ride back to the fort," he said, "and deliver this message."

Then turning to Modena, he asked, "May I remain here for the night? The soldiers will be here in the morning."

"Yes," Modena said, bowing gracefully, "this

post never turns away a stranger. You are the 'doctor.' If, as you say, the troops are coming, I don't aim to try and stop them."

That night, long after the other members of the Modena family had dropped into slumber, Captain Bailey and Sally sat on a bench beside the store, in the glory of one of Colorado's most magnificent starlit nights.

"Who is this Jack?" the captain made bold to ask. "Does he mean much to you?"

"Yes," Sally replied, "he means very, very much to me. He is going to marry a very dear friend of mine, Namaqua, who is also missing. You must find them both."

"Oh, he isn't going to marry you, then?" the captain asked. "He's going to marry the other girl! In that case I'll redouble my efforts to find him. But I'll say this much, the fellow must be stone blind."

Sally laughed. She was enjoying immensely the pleasant flattery of this handsome officer, and when she laughed it was the sweetest of music to the ears of this young man who for months had been denied the association of young womanhood by the isolation of his camp in the heart of the Westland.

CHAPTER XXVI

A Strange Marriage

"All that he needs is nourishment and ordinary care," Dr. Hutchinson said, speaking of Jack to Delaney. The latter had immediately sent for Dr. Hutchinson when Jack was brought to camp. The doctor never failed to answer a call from Delaney. He had nothing in common with the bandit, but was of such a kind nature that he could not bring himself about to refuse his services to save a human life, even though that life be that of a bandit.

The doctor and Delaney stepped outside the hut, leaving Namaqua gently smoothing back the hair that hung loosely over Jack's forehead. Her heart beat wildly with hope that Jack would live and the encouraging words of Dr. Hutchinson had lifted a great burden from her heart. She loved Jack so devotedly that she set about to bring him back to health, firmly in the belief that her great love would be unanswered and that Jack would marry Sally — in fact, Namaqua had a suspicion that Jack and Sally were already married.

"Delaney, I cannot do the thing you ask," Dr. Hutchinson said; "It is impossible."

"What is the trouble, Doctor? Aren't you a magistrate, permitted by law to perform a marriage ceremony?" Delaney inquired.

"Yes, I am, Delaney, but there isn't much use of you and me arguing this question. We do not see things in the same light. I cannot perform a marriage ceremony unless both parties are willing. I would not be a party to a forced marriage."

"I see," sneered Delaney. "You pipe about your obedience to law and yet your law does not protect a young girl from a scoundrel like Jack Sailsbury. He has betrayed Namaqua and she loves him, and yet your conscience would not permit you to compel him to do the right thing by her. I don't think much of your code of ethics."

"Personally I am not interested in what you think about my code of ethics," the doctor replied hotly.

Delaney flew into a rage. "Take this man," he commanded to one of his guardsmen, "and lock him up. Guard him and see that he does not escape."

The guard carried out his orders.

"Namaqua dear, I love you. I must find you," Jack murmured in his delirium and for the first time since she saw Jack riding toward the mountains, as she thought, to Sally, a wild sweep of happiness clutched her heart.

She bent down and kissed him tenderly. "Can it be possible that I have misjudged you?" she murmured. "O Jack, please forgive me. Please wake up. Can't you see I love you?"

Slowly Jack opened his eyes. He smiled faintly.

"O Jack, please speak to me," Namaqua pleaded.

"I love you," he said as he raised his arms to embrace her. Again Namaqua kissed him tenderly.

"You must be quiet, Jack," she said soothingly. "I will get you some food."

"My God, Namaqua, I am hungry," he answered, "and thirsty too."

"You cannot have any more water just now," Namaqua said with a smile. "Dr. Hutchinson has been here and forced considerable water through your lips while you were unconscious. You drank it greedily and he said you should have no more for a short time. He just left here a few moments ago."

"Where are we, Namaqua?" Jack inquired.

"Never mind that just now, Jack," she said. "I am going to get you some food and we will talk after you get stronger."

Namaqua rushed out of the hut and found Delaney pacing restlessly back and forth in the yard.

"He's awake. He will live," she shouted as she rushed and grasped Delaney by the arm.

He looked down at her and smiling grimly said: "Thank your God for that, Namaqua; I have none to thank."

As Namaqua was preparing a meal for Jack the happiness singing in her heart suddenly received a blow when the realization swept over her that perhaps, after all, she and Jack could never marry. What if he should be her brother? She remembered the names scrawled on the back of the photograph of her parents: "Col. and Mrs. John Sailsbury, New York City."

Jack she knew came from New York City. It was true he had told her that he would never take her back to New York City to be humiliated by his proud and aristocratic people. But she remembered he had said "people," and he never had told her anything about his parents. What if she and Jack were brother and sister? The thought weighed heavily on her heart.

When she returned to the hut she found Jack sitting up in bed. He ate his meal somewhat greedily and asked for more.

"Not just now," Namaqua said. "I am your nurse and must follow instructions. There is such a thing as feeding a famished person too much," she told him.

Jack was "feeling fine," so he assured Namaqua. "There is nothing the matter with me but hunger and thirst," he said.

Namaqua gave him another drink of water.

"Well, now that you are feeling so splendidly," she said, "I am going to ask you a few questions. I have wronged you, Jack, and I realize it now; but you are going to forgive me, aren't you?" she pleaded.

Jack took her in his arms and showered kisses upon her. "I love you," he said.

"Tell me, Jack," Namaqua asked, "are your parents living?"

"Why, yes, Namaqua," he said, "they are in New York City."

Namaqua's heart sang with joy.

"Did you ever know a Col. John Sailsbury in New York City?" Namaqua asked.

Jack looked at her in surprise. "For God's

sake, Namaqua, tell me," he almost shouted, "is he alive? Have you heard anything about him out here? He was my uncle."

"No, Jack," she said, "he is dead and he was my father. You and I are cousins. I am a white girl. I just found it out the day I ran away."

Jack grasped her and again kissed her passionately, then holding her at arm's length and looking into her eyes he said, "I always felt that you were not an Indian. But, Namaqua, we are no relation. I can tell you all about it. Your mother was Uncle John's second wife. Uncle John's first wife died and a few years later he married your mother at the dying request of your father, that they be married immediately after his death. The two men were life-long friends and the sudden marriage, after your father's death, created a sensation in social circles of New York. It caused your mother's health to fail and my uncle started with her for California in the hope of benefiting her health and getting away for a while from the gossip of their associates.

"We learned that the caravan they had taken had been attacked by Indians and the entire party killed. But I always had the hope that I might find my uncle and that was one of the reasons I

came West. Your father was James A. Carterfield, and you are from one of the most exclusive families of New York City."

Namaqua flew into his arms and Jack was kissing her tenderly as Delaney shoved open the door and with revolver drawn, forced Dr. Hutchinson to precede him into the cabin.

Delaney stopped suddenly on the threshold and placing his revolver in his belt he said:

"It looks as though I wouldn't have to use this gun. I was going to force the doctor to perform a marriage ceremony, but it now looks as though that would not be necessary."

"O I forgot to tell you, Jack," Namaqua said, "we are prisoners in the camp of Delaney."

"Yes, you are prisoners," Delaney said, "but as soon as the ceremony is performed, I am going to release you."

Namaqua then told Jack how she had seen him riding to the mountains that day and how she had thought he was going to Sally. She told him of Modena's proposal, that she test his love and how in a prankish spirit she had accepted his challenge. She told him of all that had transpired since that fateful day and then it was Jack's turn to explain to her how he had searched for her and all that

had happened to him during those terrible days of suspense. When he had finished, Delaney said: "We are wasting valuable time here. This ceremony must be performed immediately and then I will release you."

"And I know where we are going," Jack said. "I know where there is an enchanted cabin in a canon not far from the trail. We will spend our honeymoon there, if I can prevail on my good friend, Dr. Hutchinson, to ride down to the stage post and notify Modena, so that he will know we are safe."

"I will be delighted to do so," Dr. Hutchinson replied.

And thus, in the strange surroundings of the bandit's cabin, Namaqua became the wife of Jack Sailsbury.

CHAPTER XXVII

Delaney Seeks Revenge

The twisted mind of Dan Delaney had taken a peculiar turn. The meeting with Namaqua had tempered somewhat his brutal nature, made so by the loss of the woman he had loved.

As he watched Jack and Namaqua ride away a sense of loneliness took possession of him and in that loneliness there came to him an insane desire for revenge.

The face on the mountain had been explained to him by the meeting of Namaqua and Jack Sailsbury, while Jack during his rehearsal to Namaqua of all that had transpired during their separation, had told Namaqua of his night at the cabin with Sally and of his painting her picture on the mountain. Delaney came to the realization that Sally must be the daughter of the woman he had loved and lost. The likeness was so strong that he could not be mistaken.

As Delaney meditated on this, after the departure of Jack and Namaqua, a wild and brutal desire for revenge took possession of him. He mounted

his horse and for the first time since establishing his camp in the mountains, years before, he rode alone.

There was rejoicing at the stage post. Dr. Hutchinson had just arrived and told them of the finding of Jack and Namaqua and of their marriage.

Sally rejoiced at the news of the safety of the two for she loved them both.

Dan Delaney rode circles around the post. He watched the movements of those within the buildings, and by the glow of the lamps he saw Dr. Hutchinson standing in the doorway bidding Sally good-night, before mounting his horse to ride the trail toward home.

After the departure of the doctor, Sally busied herself packing her belongings for a continuance of her journey to California. She felt that with the marriage of Jack and Namaqua there was nothing left for her in Colorado.

Delaney rode closer to the cabin and waited his chance.

Presently he saw Sally step out into the beauty of the evening. She walked down toward the corral to bid good-by to her favored horse that she had ridden so many times since coming to the valley.

"Good-by, Pet," she said. "Tomorrow I am going away," and she gently patted the horse's head.

So intent was she in her last visit with the faithful animal that she did not hear the approach of Delaney who suddenly sprang upon her and placing a hand over her mouth to prevent screams, he finally succeeded in placing a gag, made from a handkerchief, in her mouth, and lifting her into the saddle he mounted the horse behind her and rode rapidly for his camp.

He spoke no words to her during his journey homeward and arriving at the camp he took her directly to his hut.

After removing the gag he commanded her to be seated.

"Sally Lee," he said, "what I do with you depends greatly upon your truthful answers to my questions. I am Dan Delaney. I held Jack and Namaqua prisoners here for some time and released them without injury because they told the truth when I questioned them. Your fate depends largely upon what you have to say.

"First I want to ask you to tell me about your mother."

Sally realized that she was in the hands of a lunatic and thought it best to humor him. Al-

though her resentment was keen, she decided to answer his questions.

"My mother," she said, "is dead; she died the day I was born."

"What caused her death?" Delaney demanded.

"A crazy lover of hers killed my father," Sally replied, "and the following day I was born. The shock killed my mother."

"What was the maiden name of your mother?" Delaney demanded.

"Sally Burch," was the reply.

"Do you know the name of your mother's slayer?" Delaney asked.

"Yes, it was Delaney," she replied.

And then like a thunderbolt the truth came to Sally. She sprang to her feet and glaring at Delaney she shouted:

"It is you! I never connected the names before. You are the murderer of both my father and my mother. When you killed him, you also killed her. Her life was forfeited by your terrible murder of my father."

Delaney, with a fierce light coming into his eyes, laughed, and when he did so, Sally fled to the corner of the room. He was the most terrible looking individual she had ever seen.

"Yes, I am the murderer of your father," he

said, "and I am glad the faithless woman is also dead. I did not know that I killed her, but I'm glad! I'm glad!" he shouted, "and I am going to kill you too!"

Sally screamed and dashed for the door, but Delaney sprang in front of her.

"Oh, don't get excited," he said. "I am not going to kill you tonight. I had not hoped for such a thing as this and I want to make it a real killing. I want you to have a chance to think it over for a while, I want you to suffer for a few hours as I have suffered for years. Therefore I am not going to kill you tonight, but tomorrow, girl, you will pay the penalty for your mother's sins. You will die. But in that death I will deal with you more kindly than your mother has dealt with me. She has made me suffer a thousand hells and I am going to be more merciful to you. You shall only have a few hours to dwell upon the tortures of death, for it is going to be torture. I am going to allow my Indians to burn you at the stake."

Delaney stalked out of the hut and Sally heard the key turned in the lock.

After he had gone she made no attempt to discover a mode of escape. Such an attempt would

have proved futile, but Sally was not even interested enough in life to make an attempt to save herself. The loss of Jack Sailsbury and the tragic recital of Delaney's confession that he was the murderer of her father, had left her despondent and she welcomed the morrow.

Death to her would be relief.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Honeymoon

Evening had again settled over the mountains as Jack and Namaqua reached their enchanted cabin.

A white cloud came down from the heavens and rested on the crest of a mountain towering nearby. The afterglow of the setting sun painted its rainbow of red, purple, and gold across the ragged edges of the cloud.

Twilight had filled the canon with peaceful solitude. Jack and Namaqua were the only inhabitants of the world. At least so it seemed to them as they rode to the cabin and dismounted.

And in their joy and happiness the cares and sorrows, joys and happiness of the world meant little to them. They lived alone and the world to them was their cabin in the hills.

"Tell me, Jack," Namaqua said as she was brewing the coffee while Jack busied himself with the frying of bacon and eggs, for their evening meal—for this was the meal of the Western traveler—cased or packed eggs, and side bacon—

"whether you are going to be as happy with me here tonight, as you were that night with Sally?"

Jack laughed. Taking her in his arms he sat down on a bench and held her as one would hold a child, kissing her and whispering to her words of endearment, until the boiling over of the coffee and the odor of burnt bacon brought them back to the realization that the evening meal needed some attention.

"Let us go down by the river, Namaqua," Jack said after they had finished their meal. "There is a bench down there just made for two and the moon is wonderful tonight."

The rumbling waters of the river sang to them the most beautiful love song they had ever heard.

"I am so glad, sweetheart," Jack said, "that you are not an Indian, although I would have loved you just the same. But I never would have taken you back to New York. Now it is different. some day we might go back."

"But it is so wonderful here, Jack, that I have lost all desire and all longing for the civilization of which I used to dream," Namaqua said. "All that I want is you, Jack, and we are so alone here that I love it."

"Yes, Namaqua," Jack added, "there is nothing

in the world as wonderful as these mountains, except you, and together we will build our home and live our lives here.

"I shudder at the thought of all the falseness of the social whirl of the big cities, as compared with the simple love and heroism of the people of the West. To be sure, we have here Dan Delaney, but he is to be pitied more than censured. He is insane and he has gathered in his band recruits from the underworld of the cities and from among the lawless element of the Indian tribes, which he controls through fear.

"Of course, Namaqua, I do not mean that there are no good people in the cities. But there are so many humans crowded into a small space back there that the falseness of life seems to stand out strong and money seems to be the god for which they are striving. I know some wonderful people in our old social set and I also know many who are holding their position in society because of their wealth alone. If these people were out here, they would be outlaws."

For two hours Jack and Namaqua sat by the river, planning their future, before going back to the cabin for the night.

The sun came up the following morning, a red

disc of fiery splendor, touching the plains with a glorious flood of light and sparkling the dew of the canon, surrounding the enchanted cabin, until the reflection danced upon the window panes like diamonds in rough drab settings of the cabin logs.

"Jack," Namaqua said, "God has been so kind to us. I love you.

"The sorrow we have gone through, the great anxiety of the past few days were but to prepare us for this wonderful life of love into which we have entered. You are so wonderful, Jack, I love you! I love you!"

Jack embraced her tenderly.

"You are right, little girl," he said, "Love really needs sacrifice to make it pure and holy. I never knew how much you meant to me until I thought I had lost you. It was then I realized that without you I would not care to live.

"You know, Namaqua, I had finally given up hope for you that day I wandered over the mountains. I thought you must be dead and when I fell beside the trail I was conscious for some time and prayed for death. Without you life meant nothing to me."

"Yes, Jack, and without you the world for me would indeed be a meaningless thing. But how

silly it was of me to doubt you. Modena, the kindly old soul, unintentionally sowed the seed of poison in my mind, when he suggested that you would go to Sally as soon as I was out of your sight, but he was honest and desired only my happiness and I hold no grudge against him.

"But when I saw you riding westward toward the mountains, his warning came to me like a thunderbolt. I lost my faith and the devil must have entered my heart because I believed firmly that you were going to her. The thought never entered my mind that you might possibly be searching for me.

"My heart was broken and I was humiliated. I thought that you were using my great love as a plaything. That you were enjoying my suffering and gloried in making a fool out of an 'Indian.' That's the way I felt about it, Jack. But I loved you so that I longed for death. I could not bear to live without you.

"When 'John' told me that I was a white girl and that Delaney had killed my parents I felt a great longing to learn my identity before I died. I felt that I was walking into a death trap when I went to Delaney, but I cared not, if I could just learn something about my mother before I died.

"But isn't life wonderful, Jack? I never even in my girlhood dreams, imagined such happiness as has come into my heart since becoming your wife. Jack, I love you," she said again and again as she nestled in his arms. "This is heaven, Jack. It must be."

"Namaqua," Jack said, "I'm never, never going to take you back East. Your beauty would so far outshine the women of my old social set that the world would be at your feet, but," he said, smilingly, "I am a jealous husband.

"You are mine, Namaqua, and mine alone," he murmured as he folded her closely in his arms.

CHAPTER XXIX

Delaney Attempts Payment

Sally, in her prison, awaited the call of doom. She heard the stern commands of Delaney to his men and knew that he was preparing for her death.

Death she did not fear, but shuddered at the horrible manner in which she must meet her fate. To be burned at the stake was a hideous thing and her heart almost stopped beating as she heard footsteps on the threshold of her cabin.

Delaney unlocked the door and entered.

"We are ready," he announced coolly; then added: "Would you like breakfast before the march to the hillside?"

"I would accept no hospitality from the hands of a dog like you," Sally retorted hotly.

"Just as you prefer," Delaney answered and then sternly commanded: "March on ahead of me."

Sally's first impulse was to refuse to march to her death and compel him to force her to the hillside where the stake had been prepared, with the brush piled high around it. But on second

thought she feared he would take it for an act of cowardice on her part and she had resolved above everything else to meet death unafraid.

The march to the stake took but a short time and Sally defiantly gazed steadily into the eyes of the hideous band of bandits that surrounded her.

A heavy black cloud rolled up from the west as Delaney began to speak. "Begone, false woman, thing accursed," he said, "despoiler of faith, the thing I once called love. Cruel, treacherous, and false, pretender and believer in a false God! Even the records of your own God show that you were the first to break the faith of man and plunge him deep in sin. You would go to any depths to gain a human heart just to break it.

"Away with her, my warriors, to the stake. I have waited years for this moment. I who am master of these hills will show you how a white man treats his queen. If, as she believes, there is a God, let Him come down and save her. Let Him dare defy the rule of your chief. Let Him show His mastery over man.

Fear clutched the heart of his followers as the clouds rolled nearer and lightning cleaved across the sky from peak to peak as if God had accepted the challenge of the madman.

Sally, with eyes flashing, looked squarely into the glazed eyes of Delaney.

"Coward!" she said, "I saw your muscles twitch. I saw fear creep into your shifting eyes. Despite your blustering, your cowardly heart almost stood still as lightning cleaved yonder sky.

"You who boast your power over these ignorant men are fearful of the laws of God. I dare you now to carry out your threat. I go to meet my Master unafraid."

Her hair fell over bared shoulders and defiance gleamed in her eyes. As she stood there, a change came over the face of the madman before her. His thoughts, perhaps, went back to his boyhood days and to the mother of this beautiful girl.

Again a strange thing happened in this twisted mind. Dropping on his knees before Sally he kissed her hand. Again the thunder peeled and lightning flashed.

Delaney stepped back a few paces and facing his men he began to speak in a calm voice:

"Men," he said, "all these years I have been leading a false life and I am through. There is a God who rules the universe. I cannot look into the eyes of this girl without realizing this fact. There is a God who rules these hills and yonder

waterfall that crashed over the dam we have constructed. You have a soul which should guide you to the right. There is a God to punish those who kill. There is a God of Love that shines always and may God and Peace and Love anoint these hills." As he ceased speaking lightning struck him dead.

He ceased speaking and again the tongued forks of lightning flashed while the thunder roared above the noise of the oncoming storm.

Dan Delaney sank to the ground. Lightning, the terror of the elements, had claimed its toll.

Sally rushed to him and gently lifted him in her arms. "He's dead," she murmured.

A shout rose from the fear-stricken followers of Delaney as they rushed for the mountain crest. The dam had given way under the pressure of a cloudburst and the waters were rushing toward them.

Sally attempted to carry the body of Delany to higher ground and she and the burden she carried were swept away into the rushing torrents of the river below.

Captain Wayne Bailey with his men had drawn up across the river in preparation for an attack on the Delaney camp.

The captain saw Sally carried down the stream

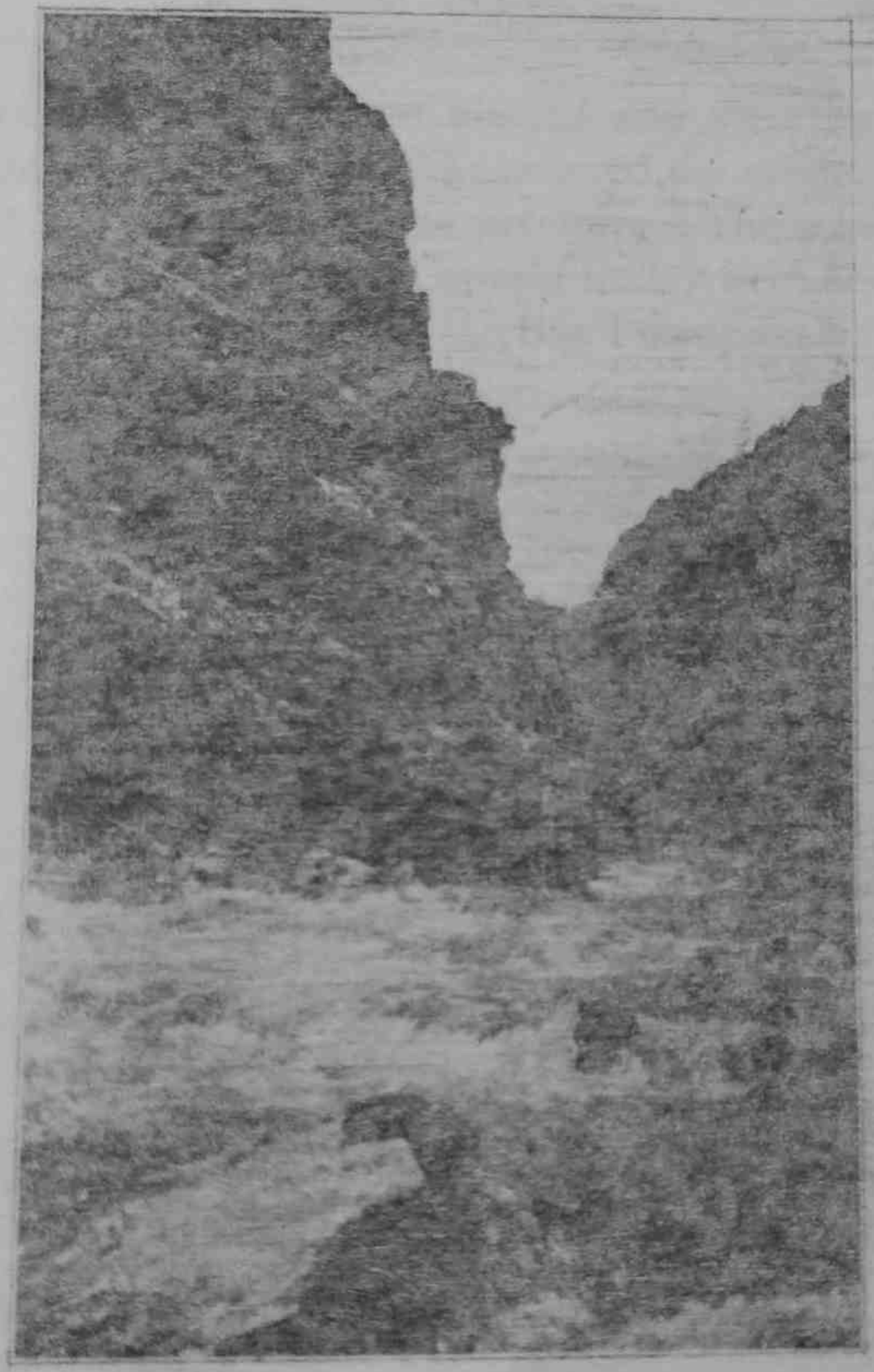
and saw her bravely struggling for her life. She clung to Delaney for some time but was finally forced to let go and the body of the dead bandit was carried away to oblivion. It was never recovered.

Captain Bailey plunged into the stream and for twenty minutes fought with the flood waters, before reaching Sally.

His men dismounted and rushing along the banks of the stream attempted a rescue of the pair struggling in the water. One of his men again remounted and rode rapidly across the hills for a half mile down stream to where the river narrowed into a steep canon. He saw the two carried on the crest of the waves, bravely fighting for life, with the arms of the captain holding Sally above the water as he struggled.

The soldier cast a rope over the steep precipice and Captain Bailey grasped it with one hand, fastening it around Sally and himself. The soldier pulled on the rope and the captain soon realized that it would not hold the two of them as it scraped against the jagged side of the sharp rocked mountain.

He shouted a command to his man to let them down again to the water and deliberately he un-



"The Face on the Mountain"

This was where Dan Delaney sought to destroy Jack Sailsbury's picture of Sally Lee, painted on the rock. Near the Loveland-Estes Park Highway, west of Loveland, Colorado, in the Big Thompson canon

fastened the rope from himself and securing it under the arms of Sally he ordered the soldier to pull her to the top of the precipice. The soldier did as commanded and Captain Bailey went down in the surging waters of the Big Thompson river.

CHAPTER XXX

The Heart of the Westland

The soldiers gathered around Sally who had been drawn to the top of the precipice.

She was weak from struggling in the water but had not lost consciousness.

"My God," she shouted, "what are you doing here? Can't you see Captain Bailey is dying down there in the water? You must save him!" she pleaded. "He deliberately sacrificed his chance to live for me. Oh, please save him! won't you?"

"A number of troopers have gone down the river," one of the soldiers informed her.

"Please help me on a horse," she said, "I must go to him. Oh, men, we cannot let him perish!"

They did as requested and all started down the river. They had traveled but a short distance when they saw the men crowded around the body of a man on the bank of the stream.

Sally hastily dismounted and rushed down the hillside and throwing herself on the body of the man, she kissed him tenderly.

"Oh, to think that I let you give your life for me!" she murmured.

"By Jove, I almost wish I had," Captain Bailey replied.

Sally sprang to her feet, her face reddening with shame. "I thought you were dead," she faltered.

"Oh, no, I'm all right," he said; "just a little weak, that's all. I just asked the boys to let me rest a little before placing me on my horse."

After a half hour Captain Bailey announced that he was ready to travel again and the troop escorted Sally back to the post at Namaqua.

Modena rushed out to meet them.

"What luck did you have with Delaney, Captain Bailey?" he asked.

"The best luck in the world," the captain replied.

"We never fired a shot or lost a man. The elements did the work for us. Delaney is dead and the last I saw of his panic-stricken band, they were fleeing over the hills. I predict that with their leader dead you will have no more trouble with them. They will leave the country never to return."

Captain Bailey then told Modena all that had happened in the mountains.

"That makes a person understand the good-

ness of God." Louis Brandt said, when Captain Bailey had finished.

"Yes," was all Modena said and Louis Papa standing nearby, made no comment. This was the way of the faithful halfbreed.

Modena then turned to Sally.

"Sally," he said, "you will make your home with me in the future, won't you? I have lost Namaqua to Jack and this would indeed be a lonely old man without the association of young womanhood."

"No, Modena, I must go on to California. I thank you for your kindness. You have been wonderful to me, but I really must continue my journey.

"Let me see, this is stage day, and it will be along in about an hour. I am going to pack my things and leave today. Not because I do not want to stay, but I feel that I really must go on," she said, as she hurried into the house to prepare for departure.

We will leave Jack and Namaqua in their enchanted cabin in the hills, where the young artist, inspired by his beautiful young wife. painted some of the great masterpieces of nature paintings. His fame as an artist could not be

hidden even in the solitude of the mountains in the then sparsely settled region of Colorado and many of them found their way from Modena's store to all parts of the country where today they hang in some of the most exclusive homes in America.

The life of Jack and Namaqua in their married state was ideal; their love was the marvel of the settlement and always when Jack rode to the stage post for supplies, he was accompanied by Namaqua and always on those trips they visited the "Spring of Truth" and the cave on the crest of Mariana Butte where Jack first told her he loved her.

The stage coach came rolling again into the post and drew up before the door. Captain Bailey had not departed for his camp at Collins.

There was something that seemed to hold him back.

He felt a queer sensation playing around his heart and a sense of loneliness at the thought of Sally passing out of his life, perhaps forever. For in those days of the slowly traveling stage-coach, California seemed to be almost at the opposite end of the earth.

Sally stepped out of the house, carrying her handbag.

Modena again began to plead with her to remain.

"I just simply cannot live here without you, Sally," he said. "Life would be a drab thing for a lonely old man like me."

"Sally, listen a moment, won't you?" It was Captain Bailey speaking.

"This man Modena will give you everything your heart desires in life. What has California to offer that Colorado cannot give you? You owe Modena something for all he has done for you. What do you owe California?"

"Nothing," Sally admitted.

"And besides," the captain continued, with a smile, "do you suppose for a minute that Modena is the only person in the valley who is going to miss you? That smile of yours will haunt me forever. Should you leave this country, I feel as though I should forget my duty as a soldier. Who can tell," he smiled, "I might desert. That would mean death. You wouldn't want me to die, would you?" he asked.

Sally laughed, and when she did the ripple of her girlish laughter was again sweet music to his ears.

"No," she said, "I wouldn't want you to die. I

owe my life to you and between you and Modena you have almost persuaded me as to where my duty lies.

"In fact, I believe you have persuaded me. I guess I shall remain here," said Sally.

Reveries Of An Imperfect Man

By Pierce Egan

Yesterday we traveled again over the scenes of our yesterdays. We traveled over the old trails which were the setting of our novel, "Namaqua," written 20 years ago. In this historical setting the pioneers of 1856 began to carve from the wilderness of northern Colorado a history more romantic than that of any other land we know. The man who laid the cornerstone for this land of destiny was Mariano Medano, who was born in Taos, N. M., in 1812 of Castilian parentage. It is around this romantic character that our story of Namaqua was written.

Starting where the story opens, at the "crossing" of the "Devil's Backbone," a picturesque ridge of stone that rises above the Big Thompson valley, we travel again one of the

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Starting where the story opens, at the "beginning" of the "Devil's Backbone," a picturesque ridge of stone that rises above the Big Thompson valley, we viewed again one of the most beautiful sights of any man's country. Down the keyhole, a natural opening in this rocky ridge, we looked to the valley below. There the Big Thompson river stretched like a ribbon of silver through well tilled farms, farms whose fertile [illegible]

sun parts the morning dew on the hillsides and the blue of the Colorado sky traces its picturesque background for the snowy range, the drab outline of Pikes peak, 130 miles away, thrusts itself through the skyline, while off to the right old Longs Peak, sinister and moody, towers high above the surrounding landscape.

From the Keyhole in the Devil's Backbone our trail leads downward to the old trading post of Namaqua. In this setting stand the old log buildings that years ago sheltered some of the most noted men of that century. Here also is the old fort, where the story of Namaqua stages the Indian battle of the almost forgotten past. Amid these scenes also was staged the battle of

tury. Here also is the old fort, where the story of Namaqua stages the Indian battle of the almost forgotten past. Amid these scenes also was staged the battle of love—a struggle as old as the ages, between a young Eastern artist and two lovely maidens of the westward.

A little farther we visited the grave of Mariana Modena and his Indian squaw-wife, whom he called "Jehr." By the crumbling walls of this old sepulcher, we thought of another tomb we visited years ago, the tomb of a man whose life had touched that of Madame Modena. We refer to the tomb of U. S. Grant, on the bank of the Hudson, overlooking New York City. As we stood pondering beside the humble and unpretentious grave of Mariana Modena, we

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house nearby.

How fleeting and fickle is the memory of man as applied to the humble citizens of our land. General Grant, by the force of his genius rose to the highest position it is possible for an American to attain and the nation has honored him worthily with a gilded tomb. Mariana Modena blazed the way for future generations in this enchanted land by being the first white settler in this territory. He and his wife sleep in an almost unknown and pitifully neglected grave. Yet, such are the fortunes and such are the destinies of men.

The First Settler in Loveland

By Zethyl Gates

Historians and would-be historians are frustrated by the scarcity of information concerning Mariano Medina's life, especially the early years. Although he was a legend in his own time, there is little recorded evidence to substantiate some of the claims made about him.

"First white'ee man on the Creek!" So Mariano proclaimed himself to be the first permanent settler on the Big Thompson Creek, in what was in 1858 the unorganized western district of the Territory of Nebraska. And, indeed, he was, according to all known records and reports from the settlers who followed soon after.

Mariano knew a good thing when he saw it; those years on the Sweetwater and the Green River had taught him a thing or two. He built a toll bridge across the Big Thompson and fenced his land along the trail in such a way that travelers had to cross his bridge.

This business venture was a success from the start, due to increased traffic along the trail, and the place became known as Marianne's Crossing, or Marianna's. It was a popular oasis for trail weary immigrants who rested by the river on their way north.

Mariano's combination store-saloon was located in the *plaza* on the west side of the wagon road leading north across his bridge or south towards Boulder City. The adobe building could also have been used as a fort. Here Mariano sold supplies to immigrants along the trail as well as to his own villagers. He stocked his store with supplies from Denver and sold them at the going price.

No one doubted that Mariano was an extremely brave man; those Indian scalps hanging on the wall of his home attested to that. He "feared neither man nor beast, was quick to take offense, and just as quick with a gun." He always carried a little "32" pistol inside his vest as insurance, and didn't hesitate to use it.

Mariano's place by the river was in a beautiful location. Towering over the entire mountain range to the west was Long's Peak and its neighbor, Meeker, somewhat reminis-ent to Mariano and his compadres of the Spanish Peaks ear their homeland. The primitive forests and quiet glades the mountains nearby abounded with deer, elk, antelope l small game, while the streams were colored with moun- trout. In the immediate area of the crossing, rose-red ffs formed a backdrop on the northwest, where the up-

For some time Dr. Barclay had treated Mariano for the painful effects of the bullets that festered in his body. One bullet had lodged in the region of the kidney and caused Mariano great pain. No one could fool Mariano; he sensed the end was near, but he had no fear of death. Calling his old friend, Lucas Brandt, to his bedside, Mariano made one last request. "Lu," he said, "when I die, I want you to make grave big enough to bury me, my two horses, and avalanch [his private carriage], and a keg of whiskey, and *that* will b business."

Mariano Medina died 28 June 1878. The news echo throughout the Rocky Mountain empire like the mour sound of distant thunder. Page one of The Denver *Times* carried this tribute:

DEATH OF MARIANO MODENA

At his old home on the Big Thompson, for a long time one o Holladay's Stage Stations, at 10 o'clock yesterday morning spirit of this well known guide, trapper and interpreter p peacefully away to "The Happy Hunting Ground" after a lon painful illness, superinduced by wounds received during his ful life in the Indian country. He was for many years associate St. Vrain, Kit Carson, Bridger and other celebrities of the

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"Nothing lives long," say the Indians.

The winds blow restlessly around Marianna Butte; the Indian Springs have almost dried up. The bridge at Mariano's Crossing has been relocated at least twice; the post office, livery barn, stone fort and even Mariano's house are gone. Mariano's "Spanish Cemetery" has indeed been desecrated now. Only the silent, silvery Big Thompson River remains.

An autograph party for Zethyl Gates, Pete Smythe and other Colorado writers will be held June 17 at the Loveland Library.